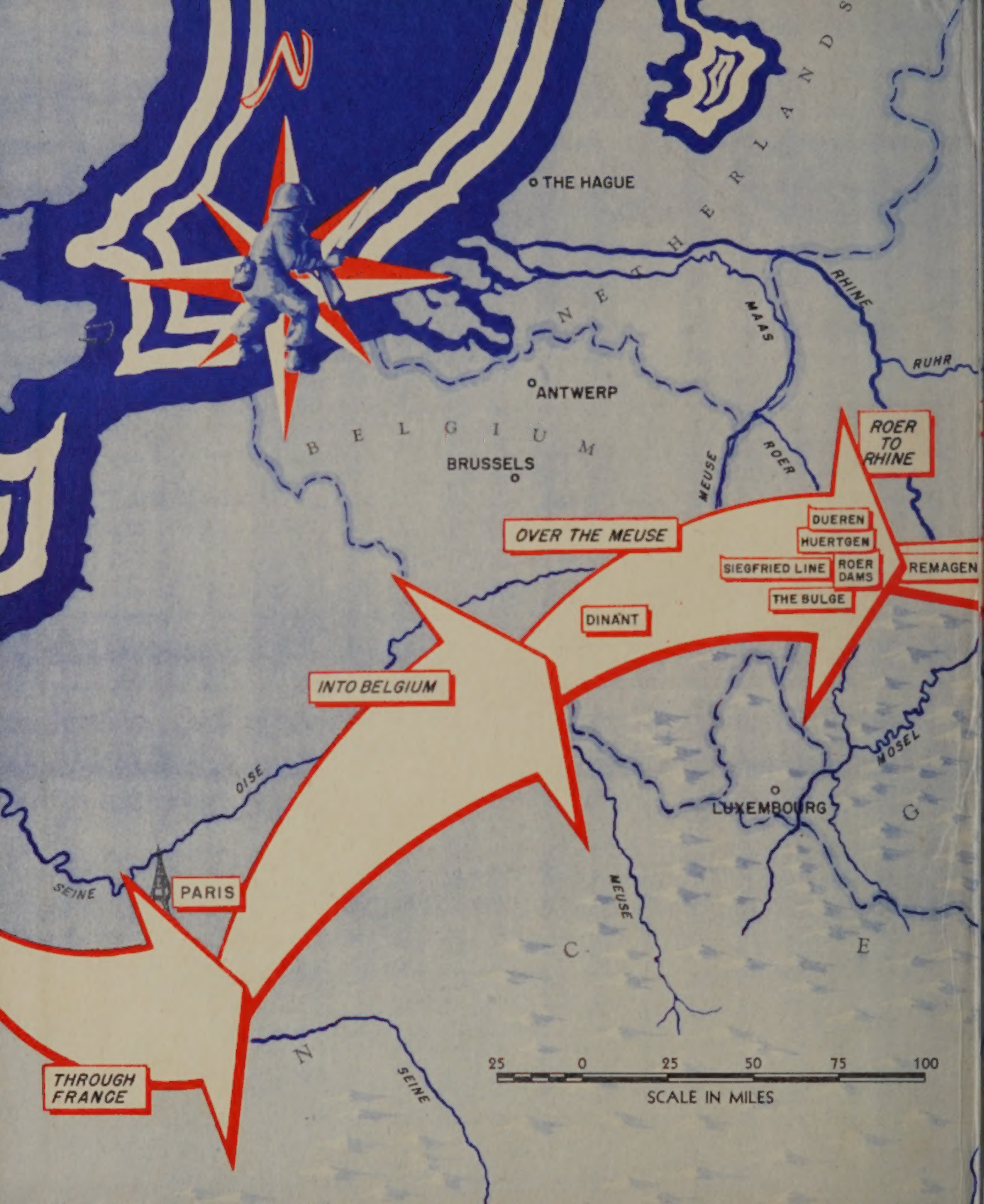
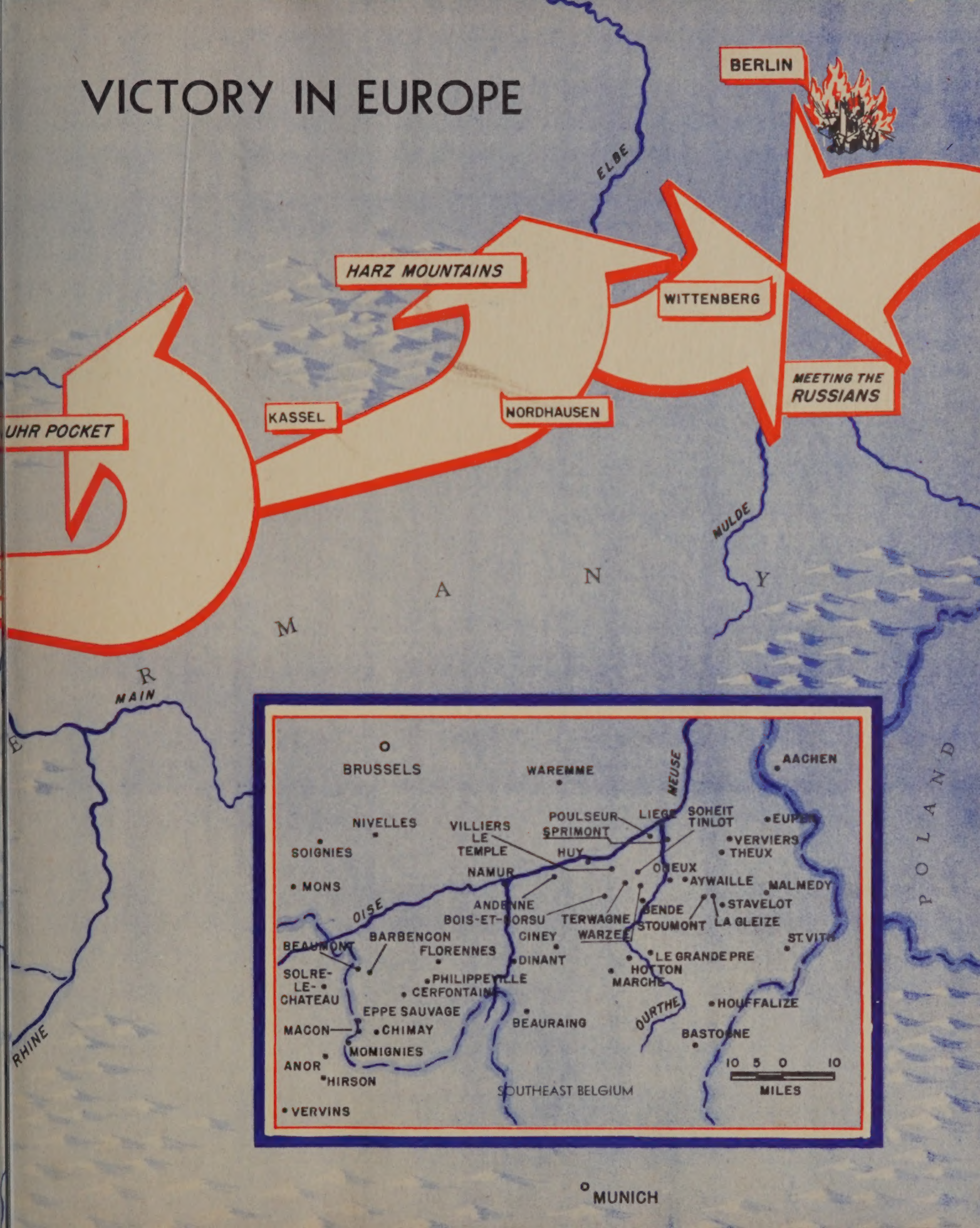

NETHERLANDS
THE HAGUE
RHINE
MAAS
RUHR
ANTWERP
BELGIUM
BRUSSELS
MEUSE
ROER
ROER TO RHINE
OVER THE MEUSE
DUEREN
HUERTGEN
SIEGFRIED LINE
ROER DAMS
REMAGEN
THE BULGE
DINANT
INTO BELGIUM
OISE
MOSEL
LUXEMBOURG
G
SEINE
PARIS
MEUSE
C
E
N
THROUGH FRANCE
SEINE
25 0 25 50 75 100
SCALE IN MILES

VICTORY IN EUROPE


BERLIN
ELBE
HARZ MOUNTAINS
WITTENBERG
MEETING THE RUSSIANS
KASSEL
NORDHAUSEN
UHR POCKET
MULDE
G E R M A N Y
MAIN
RHINE
POLAND
MUNICH
BRUSSELS
WAREMME
MEUSE
AACHEN
NIVELLES
VILLIERS LE TEMPLE
POULSEUR
SPRIMONT
LIEGE
SOHEIT TINLOT
EUPEN
SOIGNIES
VERVIERS
THEUX
HUY
NAMUR
OUFFET
AYWAILLE
MALMEDY
MONS
ANDENNE
BOIS-ET-BORSU
TERWAGNE
WARZEE
SENDE
STOUMONT
LA GLEIZE
STAVELOT
OISE
BEAUMONT
BARBENCON
FLORENNES
CINEY
DINANT
LE GRANDE PRE
ST. VITH
SOLRE-LE-CHATEAU
PHILIPPEVILLE
CERFONTAINE
HOTTON
MARCHE
EPPE SAUVAGE
BEAURAING
OURTHE
HOUFFALIZE
MACON
CHIMAY
MOMIGNIES
BASTOGNE
ANOR
HIRSON
VERVINS
SOUTHEAST BELGIUM
10 5 0 10
MILES

EIGHT STARS TO VICTORY

A History of the Veteran Ninth U. S. Infantry Division

Compiled and Written by
CAPTAIN JOSEPH B. MITTELMAN

Maps and Supplementary Art by
S/SGT. LAWRENCE E. REED

THE NINTH INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION

Copyright, 1948, by
THE NINTH INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION
P. O. Box 1704
Washington 13, D. C.

Printed in the U. S. A.

Grateful Acknowledgement to

THE F. J. HEER PRINTING CO.

THE TERRY ENGRAVING CO.

Columbus, Ohio

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

To those who wore
The Octofoil

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

With Admiration—to the men of
the Ninth Infantry Division

Omar N Bradley

★ ★ FOREWORD ★ ★

EVERY combat division has its own story. But not every division can match the story of the Ninth Infantry Division. I have looked forward to the publication of this history, because I know these men and their fighting experiences well.

I met them first in Africa, where, as part of the Second Corps, they participated in the Tunisian Campaign and helped pound out our first major victory over the Axis. That was the beginning of their long and distinguished combat record in World War II. Later, as a Corps commander in Sicily, as an Army commander in Normandy, and as their Group commander in the final months of battle, I knew and counted upon their ability to accomplish a mission speedily and effectively. I have never forgotten the courage, stamina and teamwork which distinguished them always and made them one of the outstanding fighting units in the United States Army.

No history can ever fully recapture the grim and bitter hours through which a division on the line must live, nor can it describe adequately the many factors which go into the makeup of good fighting men and good fighting divisions. But it can offer us a lesson in bravery, hard work and high morale which should never be forgotten.

To the men of the Ninth I extend cordial good wishes for every success in the peacetime careers they have so well earned.

Omar N. Bradley
General, U. S. Army

★ ★ CONTENTS ★ ★

I The Birth of A Division - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 13

II Recalled to Arms - 25

III D-DAY . . . North Africa - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 51

IV Safari in O.D. - 79

V Island Victory - 125

VI ENGLAND—Bridge to Invasion - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 147

VII INVASION—The fight rejoined - - - - - - - - - - - - - 163

VIII The Chase - 199

IX EASTWARD HO! - 239

X Winter Stalemate - 279

XI Attack and Pursuit - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 299

XII The Death of A Nation - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 343

XIII PEACE and OCCUPATION - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 379

Photography credits appear at end of each section (Photo opposite Section I, General Eagles: opposite Section V, The Do-Nut Girls).

★ ★ PREFACE ★ ★

TO write of the Ninth Infantry Division is to be faced with a dilemma. Acres and acres of records abound in Army and private files—each paper sheet in seeming eagerness to shout it own particular praise of America's *Old Reliables*. Thousands upon thousands of photographs and sketches depict the sensational combat records of the Ninth. And more than fifty-five thousand different versions, regarding what happened to the Division during the years 1940-1947, easily could be gathered from a like number of individuals who wore the tri-colored *Octofoil* upon their shoulders.

Of what, then, should an historian write? That question was of peculiar concern in the deliberations and long discussions of the author and his advisors in planning *Eight Stars to Victory*. After a cautious two-year extraction of information from several roomfuls of reports, wartime publications and private papers, a sufficient amount of material was compiled to write a set of several volumes. As a matter of fact, each individual platoon or squad was rated worthy of the space covered by this one history.

The segregation and elimination of inapplicable material was the next job. In this, many factors had to be considered. Firstly, each man who lived a part of this story had his own particular views of what happened. These various interpretations of *Eight Stars* are the natural, logical outgrowth of the fact that one fighting soldier engaged in combat sees things a little differently than does his neighbor. In addition, soldiers fighting for their lives have infrequent opportunities to record historical facts—there are too many other things to do in battle which are of infinitely more importance.

For the infantryman or medic, the battle seldom is more than those actions which occur within a mile to the front, flanks or rear. For the artilleryman and armored force soldier, the area is slightly larger, but equally small in comparison to the *big picture*. Moreover, it has been noted quite frequently, that persons, standing side by side at the scene of an accident or fighting in adjacent foxholes, see things in different lights.

In compiling and writing this volume, therefore, we desired keenly to portray the events which would be of mutual interest to every former member of the Ninth, their families and their friends. That has been the prime motivating power behind this story. Confirmed official records have been used as the basis for the text, together with a liberal interspersing of on-the-scene reports, first-hand information, interviews, diaries, newspaper accounts and photographs. The finished work in its preliminary stages was reviewed by a board of former commanding officers and other combat veterans to insure that *accuracy* and *balance* were present; and every effort was made to include some mention of each unit engaged as part of the team that was the Ninth Infantry Division.

This, then, is not just a history of the Ninth, it is more *the story* of that Division. Its heroes named are simply examples of many others—of thousands unsung in their daily acts of bravery. And although some of the terminology of the Army has been eliminated so that persons unfamiliar with such expressions might better enjoy this tale, it was felt that totally obliterating service jargon would subtract from the realism of the work.

Many unusual words are explained in the supplement to this volume, and a smattering of the exacting data and figures sometimes sought by the military is contained here as well. Maps were drawn to be of interest to the layman as well as the soldier or tactician; photographs were selected for general interest and not for proving that any one battalion or company won the war single-handed!

* * * *

NATURALLY, the Ninth Infantry Division did not win the war by itself—and such a statement by any unit smaller than a theater command is false, bigoted and without foundation. Moreover, the Ninth was not perfect. It made mistakes and probably some big ones. But more often than not, the Division performed excellently under adverse conditions.

The men of the Ninth were not all heroes, and the officers were not all infallible. A majority of the *Old Reliables* were among the finest soldiers in the world. However, as is natural in any large organization—military or civilian—there were some *eight-balls*. At times it was necessary to relieve certain officers and men from command and other important duties. In some cases courts-martial were necessary . . . but that is the normal conduct of war in any outfit.

Realizing that each page devoted to relief of commanders and courts-martial would be of aid to no one except persons with an axe to grind, we have eliminated all reference to such occurrences. It is not the purpose of *Eight Stars to Victory* to crucify anyone who may have lost his head under the strain of combat.

Furthermore, while this is a book of all the organizations which made up the Ninth Infantry Division, it is mostly the story of the platoons and squads of frontline soldiers who did the fighting, the suffering and the dying. Many platoons experienced a complete turnover *eight or more times* during the days of combat, and to them should go the majority of the credit for any success garnered by the Ninth.

* * * *

THE TREMENDOUS task of gathering the maps, photographs and research material for a history of this size—as well as the compiling and writing of the text itself—could not have been accomplished without the helping hand of many persons. Although a list of those who rendered assistance is contained in the supplement of this volume, it would seem well to give particular thanks at this time to that fine group who worked closest with the author and who made possible the completion of *Eight Stars to Victory.*

First of all, we had in charge of our staff two veteran combat leaders without whom there would have been no book . . . no historian. Lt. General Manton S. Eddy, as chairman of the Ninth Division Association History Committee handled the immense and complicated problems which arose from time to time in a most commendable manner. His keen understanding and unpublicized aid in our long road to the finished volume were an enormous factor in the success of this history. In addition, he carefully read that portion of the volume pertaining to his period of command, so as to insure that an accurate and well-balanced story would be presented. Working with General Eddy was Colonel John G. Van Houten, our immediate superior, who not only performed innumerable services in reference to the history while overseas, but who upon return to the States immediately jumped into the task of overseeing our work. It was largely through his efforts that funds were made available to provide gratis one copy to the next of kin of each Ninth Division soldier killed in action.

Special thanks are due General Omar N. Bradley, who wrote the foreword of this book and the excellent letter which closes Section XII.

The excellent map and artwork, as well as the paper jacket of Staff Sergeant Lawrence E. Reed is his own mirror. Working day and night this soldier produced the *schematic maps* found throughout the pages of this volume. In many other ways Sergeant Reed proved a valuable assistant. Mrs. Hazel G. McGuire—secretary, critic and corrector of spelling—typed over one million words to bring you the 180,000 words contained in this text. Mr. Hans G. Meile did the cover, section initials and supplementary artwork, as well as planning the initial layout. Mrs. Doretha Gray helped get the volume ready for the publisher. These were my *staff*—capable, understanding and hard-working.

The group of experts who checked and rechecked the first drafts for accuracy and balance were all volunteers, who gave freely of their time and effort to implement this work. Mere mention of their names is insufficient reward for jobs well done, and the Ninth Division owes them a debt of gratitude for this service. The men of the Ninth knew them well:

Major General Louis A. Craig
Major General S. LeRoy Irwin
Major General Donald A. Stroh
Brigadier General Erwin S. Randle
Brigadier General Hammond D. Birks
Brigadier General George W. Smythe
Brigadier General Benjamin F. Caffey
Lt. Colonel Van H. Bond
Lt. Colonel William C. Westmoreland
Lt. Colonel Frederick C. Feil
Lt. Colonel Randall H. Bryant
Lt. Colonel Peter O. Ward
Major John H. Whitmore
Major Robert Bingham

Division commanders, Major General Horace L. McBride and Brigadier General Jesse A. Ladd, gave their support to this work while the Ninth was yet overseas, as did the various public relations officers and regimental and artillery battalion historians. Thanks are due the Ninth Infantry Division Association, the Historical Division and the Historical Records Section (AGD) of the Department of the Army (Washington, D.C.), the Maryland Military District under Colonel John M. Lentz, Second Army Headquarters, Second Army Signal Section (Camp Holabird, Maryland), the U.S. Army Signal Corps (Washington, D.C.) and the Ohio Military District for being most sympathetic and cooperative. Lt. General Albert C. Wedemeyer, Lt. General Leonard T. Gerow, Major General Robert B. McClure, Major General John T. Lewis and Brigadier General Wayne C. Zimmerman aided greatly in providing the means to solve our many problems.

Hundreds of former members of the Ninth Division wrote letters of information, sent photographs and personally visited the historian. Their first-hand experiences uncovered a wealth of information. The various history committees which have been constituted along the way did their bit as well. And there were other organizations and individuals who gave the history a boost.

When all this voluminous information was converted into the final draft text, two professors from Johns Hopkins University and the Baltimore City Junior College, Colonel Clarence T. De Haven and Dr. Lawrence H. Baker, did a most commendable job of proof-reading the entire book for errors of grammar and spelling.

Finally, at the publication phase itself, Mr. Roy Kautzman of The Heer Printing Company proved to be a superb advisor and friend.

* * * *

AS MENTIONED previously, to write of the Ninth Infantry Division is to be faced with a dilemma. But it is a satisfying job—for few military units have lived as colorful a career; fewer still have been so consistently excellent under all conditions. When one spends two and a half years researching, compiling and writing the story of such a group of men, he is compelled to stop and take notice. As time goes by, the job becomes a *trust* and a *duty* . . . later an *obsession.*

Now that my work has ended, I turn over the story to you. Guard it . . . retell it . . . pass it on. It is timeless and true.

Joseph B. Mittelman

COLUMBUS, OHIO

When the Hun has seized the rod,
He smites his fellow man and God;
But when the Hun is poor and down,
He's the meekest man in town.
—From the Dutch, 1580

Section I

The Birth of a Division

The Past in Review

A THRONG of more than three thousand spectators watched the impressive ceremonies that day. It was July 15, 1947, at Fort Dix, New Jersey. In the stands were combat veterans of World War II, their wives, children and friends, as well as many patients from nearby Tilton General Hospital. Lined up on the reviewing field were several high-ranking officers who had distinguished themselves in battle. Farther down the parade grounds, an infantry division was prepared to enter the scene with the usual fanfare and martial music that accompanies a large military ceremony.

There was something that all these people had in common that July afternoon. They were participating in one of those rare moments of postwar American history—the rebirth of an infantry division which had achieved a fighting record equalled by few others. After six months of honored rest, the veteran Ninth Infantry Division was being reactivated.

Behind the twenty-five senior officers who crowded the reviewing stand rose the massed standards, colors and guidons of the famous Ninth. There were those of the 39th, 47th and 60th Combat Teams—all members of the World War II Ninth Division; and there was a new set, belonging to the 365th Infantry Regiment, formerly a unit of the 92nd Infantry Division. These four regiments constituted the reborn *Old Reliables;* and their colors, standards and guidons were resting, for the time being, with a guard of honor from the 327th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division.

Everyone had praise that day for the gallant achievements of the Ninth Division. First Army commander General Courtney H. Hodges spoke of the Division's excellence in battle and Major General Manton S. Eddy took over from there. General Eddy, former combat commander of the Ninth quoted the battle-honored service records of the units being reactivated. After the reading of each infantry regiment or artillery battalion record was completed, former commanding officers presented organization standards to the new unit commanders.

Finally, it came to the last and most important standard of them all, that of the Ninth itself. General Eddy presented this red and blue emblem to Major General William W. Eagles, former battle commander of the 45th Infantry Division and now the first commanding general of the new Ninth Infantry Division. As his first official act, General Eagles ordered the Division to pass in review.

Behind the striking music of the Division's 75-piece band, the newly reactivated Ninth passed in review, flags waving in the Jersey breeze and participants doing their best to make the occasion a memorable one. Tentatively the new Ninth was to be a training outfit, constantly changing and always full of recruits—but it was to be a crack unit just the same. That was apparent in the faces of the men marching by; it radiated from the reviewing stand and was in the hearts and hopes of former Ninthmen who had come to view the Division they liked so well rejoin the Regular Army.

From the sidelines and from the spectators' stand, these former members of the Ninth gazed intently at the standards and guidons passing by—those were the same emblems of freedom which had led them through North Africa, Sicily, France, Belgium and Germany. And here were their old outfits, too. There was the 39th Infantry—memories of Algiers, the landings in Sicily, Quineville, Octeville, Mortain

> There were old-timers who fought in the battles of Europe marching side by side with the youngsters who know little as yet about the uniform, but the spirit of the Ninth seemed to be prevalent everywhere.
>
> —Warren H. Kennet (*NEWARK NEWS*)

and the *Siegfried.* Here came the 47th Combat Team . . . remember them at Safi? Cherbourg? . . . or at Remagen? And the 60th, those *Go-Devils* . . . Port Lyautey, the famous silent march in Sicily, the River Douve, those night attacks, the Schmidt Dam . . . who could forget the 60th? One could not forget that hard-hitting Division Artillery, either. They stopped Rommel at Thala and saved the Allies from a great defeat . . . their heavy firepower made possible the story of the Ninth.

What a story these guidons and standards told . . . and what an amazing saga the regiments and the artillery of the Ninth Infantry Division had lived. Eight battle stars were their lot during World War II: in the first World War the three infantry regiments had earned many additional honors as well. Yes, the pages of history held open a span of thirty years to record the birth and rebirth of the Ninth and its regiments. They were years of ups and downs; of victories and hardships, comradeship and devotion to the love of freedom. In two wars the enemy had been the same, and in both wars the result had been equally catastrophic for the German nation.

Let us turn back the clock to the beginning of it all . . .

* * * *

IT was the time of *Square* divisions, *Springfield* rifles, high-standing collars, wrap-leggins and tin helmets. Mechanized warfare was symbolized by the Parisian Taxi Army—or by the flimsy *Spads* which dared Von Richthofen's *Flying Circus* to battle dog-fight fashion. Quite appropriately, therefore, in those bloody days of frontal attacks and trench warfare, infantry was an important factor. And quite appropriately, the War Department created several more infantry divisions. Some were formed and shipped overseas in time to stem and turn back the Prussian tide of 1918. Others, like the Ninth Infantry Division, were not to see battle until an Austrian paper-hanger, named Adolf Hitler, tried to outdo the Kaiser in conquest and cruelty.

World War I was well upon its way when the War Department authorized the activation of another Regular Army division—the Ninth. It was a sweltering July day of 1918 when the first cadre streamed into Camp Sheridan, Alabama. These were the regulars who would form the skeleton upon which the new Division would grow. A few days later the Ninth Field Artillery Brigade was born at nearby Camp McClellan, and under the first Division commander, Colonel Charles G. Clark (father of General Mark W. Clark) an intensive combat training program was begun.

All the units making up the original Division were Regular Army, except two infantry regiments—and these obtained their founding personnel from old line outfits. In those days of ankle choker breeches and summer heat, it took just such well-trained men as these to withstand the tortures of training under the overpowering Alabama sun.

When two months of vigorous training had melted into the heat of summer, the Division received its first commanding general, Major General W. A. Holbrook. He assumed command on September 18, 1918, expecting to lead the Division overseas. During late October the Ninth completed its major training and prepared to sail.

But General Holbrook was to be denied the first combat command of the Ninth Division. Before the Ninth had completed arrangements for overseas movement, the whirlwind campaign of the American Expeditionary Force ended. Germany sued for peace and November 11, 1918, was selected as Armistice Day.

Cessation of hostilities also put to an end any further training for the not-too-sad doughboys and artillerymen of the Ninth Division. On New Year's Eve, 1918, the Division began the double process of demobilization and inactivation; by mid-February of 1919 the Ninth Division was but a memory. Its period of active duty had been of too short a duration even to design a shoulder sleeve insignia!

The original Ninth Division was composed of: 17th Infantry Brigade (45th and 67th Infantries, 26th Machine Gun Battalion), 18th Infantry Brigade (46th and 68th Infantries, 27th Machine Gun Battalion), Ninth Field Artillery Brigade (25th and 26th (Light) and 27th (Heavy) Field Artillery, Ninth Trench Mortar Battery), 25th Machine Gun Battalion, 209th Engineers, 209th Field Signal Battalion, Trains (Hq. Train and Military Police Company, Ninth Sanitary Train, Ninth Motor Supply Train, Ninth Ammunition Train) and Division Headquarters.

* * * *

ALTHOUGH the Ninth had a brief and unexciting activation during World War I, the infantry regiments destined to reform the Division during the second world war saw a great deal of action. The men of the 39th and 47th Infantry Regiments earned a combined total of sixty-six *Distinguished Service Crosses*: the 60th Infantry Regiment produced the soldier whom General Pershing called ". . . the outstanding individual hero of the American Expeditionary Force."

The old *square* division had two infantry brigades, which in turn were made up of two regiments each. As partners of the 7th Infantry Brigade, the 39th and 47th Regiments fought under the banner of the 4th Division. The 60th Infantry gained renown with the 5th Division.

Camp Syracuse, New York, witnessed the birth of the 7th Brigade on June 1, 1917. Fall found the 39th and 47th switching their training area to Pleasant Beach, a summer resort just outside Syracuse. Whatever life of ease was afforded by this locality ended on October 25th, however, when the brigade began movement to Camp Greene, North Carolina. Here, home meant a squad tent floating around in a quagmire.

During early December, the 7th Brigade became part of the 4th Division. New Year's Day passed and 1918 began with renewed training—despite atrocious weather, which necessitated bringing food and other supplies by mule pack train.

Over at another area of Camp Greene was the temporary home of the 60th Regiment, which came into being shortly after the 7th Brigade partners. Such great victories as the *impossible* crossing of the Meuse, and the memorable battle of St. Mihiel, were in the making when the 60th Infantry received its colors on June 11, 1917. Hallowed Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, was the place; and it was altogether fitting that the regiment which produced *America's Greatest Doughboy,* Captain Sam Woodfill, should have its first breath under the shadow of Lincoln's historic speech.

But for the 60th, as for the 39th and 47th Regiments, Camp Greene seemed a long distance from the trenches of France during the first three months of 1918. Doughboys spent their dollars in Charlotte, cursed high wartime prices and thanked heaven that the mud was drying at last.

Then came the tense day of March 21st. A full-scale German counterattack threatened the entire Allied line; Russian resistance collapsed, then disappeared. Von Hindenburg now was able to throw an unbelievable force of two hundred veteran divisions against the Allies on the Western Front. For the Allies, the situation was grave. American reinforcements were needed urgently and President Wilson quickly ordered every available unit shipped overseas. That meant the 4th and 5th Divisions, and these outfits pitched vigorously into the task of preparation.

* * * *

ONE YEAR, to the day, after America's declaration of war, the 60th Infantry started upon the long journey which was to end in France. Within a few days its heavily-laden soldiers climbed aboard transports at Hoboken, N.J. By May 4th the entire regiment was reassembled at Bar-Sur-Aube, France, and an extremely tough program of overseas conditioning got under way.

Meanwhile, back at Camp Greene, the 4th Division prepared to depart for the battlefronts of the old world. On April 25th, the 39th and 47th Infantries left for Camp Mills, New York; shortly after their arrival the regiments set sail.

Sun-bathed France was reached on May 23rd . . . and not a moment too soon for the unlucky doughboys who were jam-packed into Italian cattle boats. Wide-eyed soldiers of the 47th landed at Brest, with two companies of the 39th attached: Bordeaux was the debarkation point for the latter regiment. Broadway's bright lights, Chicago's Loop, Texas' longhorns, San Francisco's Golden Gate and muddy Camp Greene seemed far away, indeed.

Early June was spent under the tutelage of battle-hardened instructors of the British 16th Infantry Division at Samar. Training with the French followed—six miles behind the front lines. Now the 39th was, at last, able to fire its rifles. In the haste to ship divisions overseas, the regiment had been deprived of any target practice. Such was the strange war of 1918—a vast majority of men in the

39th Infantry had been sent to within hearing range of the battlefront without having fired a shot in their lives!

At this time, Germany had just two knockout punches left in her bag of tricks. The first was a masterful drive, which began on May 27th. When the legions of Crown Prince Wilhelm began this ambitious thrust, it was a signal for all *Yanks* to strip for action and head for the front. By-passing Paris, the 39th and 47th traveled in those well-known rail chariots of two wars, the *40 and 8's*, to the north of the French capital, detrained and began marching to their destination of Chateau-Thierry, under the path of an occasional German shell.

Next day, to the south of St. Die, men of the 60th Infantry went on the line for the first time. Their entry into combat was planned to occur in a "quiet sector." On June 18th the Germans struck at the 2nd Battalion with liquid fire and gas, and thus occurred the first recorded frontline combat for any unit of the later reactivated Ninth Infantry Division.

The German drive which began on May 27th was halted and a lull reigned along the trench-pocked front. Then on July 14th—France's *Fourth of July*—the Crown Prince launched the enemy's last great offensive . . . only to be stopped short of his goal once again. Marshal Foch, the supreme Allied commander now rushed up extra divisions for his long-awaited counter-offensive, and the Germans issued a retreat order to their troops over the Marne.

* * * *

ON July 18th the Aisne-Marne Offensive began and the fortunes of war swung in favor of the Allies. Part of the striking power which sparked this drive was furnished by fresh American troops —among which were those of the 39th Infantry. What happened to the regiment is so typical of combat that it might seem well to linger awhile on this action:

Slightly to the north of the River Ourcq are the villages of Troisnes and Faverolles. Here also is the Savieres, a deep stream of slight breadth. Its water rests upon a swampy, sticky mud—not unlike America's Mississippi. From this ancient battleground the 39th Infantry was destined to have its entry into combat.

On July 20, 1918, the 39th Infantry Regiment received the French *Croix-de-Guerre with Gold Star,* for its spectacular capture of Cresnes Wood and Noroy. Its baptism of fire, to quote the French citation, ". . . gave proof . . . of admirable bravery." This is the first decoration won by any unit of the later reconstituted Ninth Infantry Division, and gained for the regiment the nickname of *The Fighting Falcons.*

It was July 17th . . . a pitch-black night of living nightmare. To complete the relief of the French 11th Infantry, the 39th had to make its way over a shell-gutted road which was under constant artillery fire. Warm summer rain added to the general discomfort of the situation. Stumbling forward, soldiers dodged shells, slid into craters and were forced to hang onto the pack of the man in front—so as not to become lost.

Now the regiment was on line. Men flopped into trenches and tried to grab some much-desired sleep; officers checked for the next move. It was against an objective directly to the front, a shell-cropped thicket of woods perched upon a hill. To reach this area (Cresnes Wood) the 39th needed to cross the difficult River Savieres. Germans thought this operation well nigh impossible and had most of their fortifications and gunpower facing in other directions.

The battle of indoctrination began at 4:30 A.M. with all the death that twenty-three battalions of French artillery could rain down upon the Germans. In retaliation, enemy field pieces blazed away at the Americans. Men ducked instinctively; a nervous lump of expectancy throbbed in their chests and stomachs. They were next! A long wait . . . and then the 1st Battalion of the 39th Infantry went forward into battle at 8 A.M.

Mud dripping from their knees, the doughboys hesitated momentarily at the north bank of the Savieres. Anxious minutes passed while wooden poles were brought up and flung across the slimy stream. Then slippery shoes negotiated these hastily-devised bridges and the 39th Infantry was across, ready to surprise the *Hun!*

Like the rising waters of a spring flood, footsloggers oozed up the rugged terrain. The enemy had expected little trouble from his rear, consequently this unorthodox assault proved too much for the Germans in Cresnes Wood. Machine-gun crews, while offering some resistance, were overwhelmed by this surprise sweep through the swamp —as the Americans mopped up position after position. When the 2nd and 3rd Battalions reached the River Ourcq, the 1st was busily engaged in counting noses of its more than one hundred prisoners, as well as the regiment's first captured machine guns and souvenirs.

The battle continued, as the regiment pushed beyond the rim of Noroy village and halted for the night. At four the following morning, the 39th launched an assault against the powerful German positions to their front. Without flank protection or artillery support, the 3rd Battalion advanced 300 yards over open terrain in the face of enemy machine-gun and point-blank artillery fire to capture the main enemy strongpoint.

At the same time, the 1st Battalion was driving on the typically French hamlet of Chouy. On its flank was the 2nd Battalion, trying desperately to advance through a combination of swamp and closely-knit woods, where men found it difficult to keep up the pace, let alone fight.

Unknown to the 39th Infantry, the *zero hour* for the morning assault had been moved up to 5:30 A.M. A tremendous preparation of artillery was scheduled to precede the attack—over the very ground upon which the regiment was advancing. When this information was received it was too late to stop the concentration and within minutes, French *75* shells intended for the enemy fell among the Americans. The 39th was hit badly from all sides.

This was a time when courage was all that could hold together an organization and the 39th was superb. It outdistanced the French artillery to its rear, captured the chattering German machine guns to its front, and overran blazing Chouy. A few hours later the regiment was relieved and returned to reserve. As the 39th Infantry trudged wearily to the rear, many men thought of the strange experiences just encountered. Some part of their insides had changed—they never again would be the same.

* * * *

ROUGH times were in store for the footsloggers of the 47th Infantry on July 28th. They were moving up to relieve two battalions of the hard-pressed 42nd *(Rainbow)* Division at Sergy. In one of the most bloody battles of the war, the 1st and 3rd Battalions were to suffer over 500 casualties during three days of combat. Considering that only 1,200 men actually engaged the enemy, this was a tremendous loss. But the first encounter of the 47th with the Germans was a memorable success. Sergy, strategic town of the Ourcq Valley, returned to Allied possession and the 4th (Prussian) Guards Division was mauled beyond recognition.

It was on July 28th that the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 47th Infantry reached the high ground above Sergy. During the following day, these units battled forward against increasing opposition. The 3rd cracked the German lines and began entering Sergy. Fighting *Indian style,* the Americans infiltrated in small groups and soon were in possession of that town. Then the enemy recovered from his surprise, and a terrific onslaught of artillery and machine-gun fire was thrown at the 3rd Battalion.

Repeated counterattacks were repulsed by the now isolated battalion. Ammunition and food supplies were running low; wounded and dying were everywhere—both American and German. Medics ran a gauntlet of fire to evacuate the first casualties, then set up an aid station inside Sergy. Losses mounted as mustard gas and enemy air attacks rained down upon the stubborn doughboys.

By the 30th, the battalion was using German guns and ammunition, throwing captured *potato-masher* grenades. Enemy dead were piled high around the town. A final murderous artillery barrage all but destroyed Sergy on July 31st, after which wave after wave of the enemy advanced to take the town at all costs. Suddenly to the rear of the 3rd Battalion came new blood, a machine gun company from the 42nd Division. They opened fire in time to assist the besieged battalion. This new force was too much for the Germans, who admitting defeat, withdrew. Limping, gassed and wounded, the 3rd Battalion was relieved in Sergy; it had shrunk to the size of a line company!

On August 1st the Germans began to retreat through the mud toward the Vesle River, covered by

THE 39th DIGS IN AT FRESNES (July 1918)

delaying machine-gun crews and followed closely by the 39th and 47th Infantries. At the Vesle the enemy had a natural barrier. It was Cresnes Wood all over again; only this time, machine guns and artillery covered every possible avenue of approach. Patrols of the 39th Infantry probed across the Vesle near Bazoches on August 4th . . . the first Allied troops over that river. When the regiment attempted to cross in strength on the morning of August 5th, however, it met an inferno of lead. After many costly tries, only 38 men were put across by the 39th and a temporary halt was called to the operation.

The 47th Infantry relieved the 39th and early on August 7th the 2nd Battalion led over the Vesle, followed by the 3rd. By swimming, crossing on fallen logs and other ingenious methods, 350 men managed to battle their way to the far shore. Germans counterattacked, but the infantrymen brushed aside the overwhelming odds and by the 8th were in the town of Bazoches.

During the river crossing, most of the regiment's gas masks had been ruined and the foe was firing thousands of gas shells. The 47th was holding the bridgehead alone and taking a severe beating . . . it was forced to withdraw or face annihilation. Slowly the doughboys worked their way back across the river, leaving over 100 dead lying in the wake of their retreat. The Germans were too strong on the Vesle; a stable front had halted the Allied advance, of which the farthest troops forward had been the 47th Infantry.

* * * *

TWO main offensives remained before the American Expeditionary Forces could say *finis* to the war. Both were All-American drives, executed as such at the insistence of General Pershing. The first was the St. Mihiel Offensive, which marked the beginning of the United States Army as an entity in France: the second and more important was the immortal Meuse-Argonne Offensive, the American push which cracked the German war machine and ended the war.

For the 39th and 47th Infantries, the period from September 12th to October 12th meant a continuation of the hardest type of fighting. It meant the battle for *Dead Man's Hill,* where the brigade partners plodded through swamps to capture 1,700 prisoners, over 40 artillery pieces and countless numbers of trench mortars and machine guns. It meant rain and mud, poison gas, wet clothing and aching feet. Barbed wire, water-filled holes for beds and nights under shellfire added to the discomfort of battle.

During October 12, 1918, however, the 4th Division was relieved by the 5th Division along the Meuse. Days later the 39th and 47th Infantries marched back to the Second Army area, to train, rest and recuperate. Their good fortune was even better than most realized, for the brigade's part in the great war was over.

Veteran footsloggers hiked back to the rear, lean and filthy with the mud and sweat of combat. Peaceful terrain and nights of sleep—interrupted only by memories—seemed too good to be true. Now the destructive sounds of war faded into the distance, as weary feet tramped out a steady cadence . . . thump, thump, thump . . . down the road and out of sight.

* * * *

THE first decisive German defeat at the hands of the AEF began on September 12th. Three days later the 60th Infantry was on line, advancing against heavy odds. There followed a brief period of rest and on September 25th, the 1st Battalion was dispatched to aid the French, north of Pont-a-Mousson. Then came Meuse-Argonne, the offensive designed to crack a powerful German wall of final defense which had been four years in preparation.

Columbus Day found the 60th Infantry reconnoitering Cunel, a valley town astride an important road junction just south of Bois-de-la-Pultiere. A wooded knoll of this forest jutted into Cunel, and here was an enemy strongpoint. In addition American forces had to cross an open slope to enter the town.

Doughboys had gone without sleep over 72 hours by the morning of October 14th; many had been in action and under constant shelling. Yet the fighting continued until some were ready to drop of exhaustion.

At 6:30 A.M., the 60th assaulted Bois-de-la-Pultiere. It was necessary to seize Cunel prior to taking the woods and Companies *B* and *C* charged over the open terrain to capture that town. They lost almost half their men but kept on advancing. The remnant companies worked through the town and into the woods, where they met a withering stream of machine-gun fire. The Germans had caught the American flank.

Battling forward through Bois-de-la-Pultiere, the 60th found the enemy everywhere. Mud and dense thickets made the going tough; disorganization was a natural consequence. By October 15th the regiment was chopped to pieces and desperately in need of sleep. Nonetheless, it started a 7:30 A.M. attack which led from Bois-de-la-Pultiere through Bois-de-Rappes, a forest death trap. Rugged fighting ensued, but in its delirium of battle the regiment kept going until the 16th, when welcome relief arrived. At that time a tired and battered 60th Infantry accepted 600 replacements and could have used more.

* * * *

IF German soldiers were astounded by the unusual military tactics of the American infantryman, they were to be surprised even further by his daring ingenuity. During the early hours of November 5th, the 60th Infantry effected the *impossible* crossing of the River Meuse. This action was regarded by contemporary military experts as indicative of the

It was at Cunel and Bois-de-la-Pultiere that Captain Sam Woodfill earned his *Congressional Medal of Honor.* The advance had stalled, halted by a series of German machine-gun nests. Captain Woodfill, commanding Company *M* of the 60th Infantry, decided to do something about this condition. He grabbed a special sharpshooter's rifle and made his way forward. One-by-one, the intrepid captain destroyed the machine-gun nests. When he had finished, 19 Germans lay dead by their weapons, the advance was stalled no longer.

In 1920, when Sam Woodfill was at the ceremony for the *Unknown Soldier,* General Pershing referred to the gallant captain as "America's greatest doughboy."

skill possessed by American fighting men. General Pershing referred to it as ". . . one of the most brilliant feats in the history of the American Army in France." Whereas no single unit has ever won a modern war, the crossing of the Meuse under a devastating fire did convince the enemy that further resistance was futile.

Permanent bridges along the Meuse had been destroyed by the Germans during their retreat. When the 2nd Battalion approached its boat launching sites on November 4th, enemy artillery began to destroy all equipment. Boats would start for the far shore, only to be cut to ribbons by the accurate German batteries. Since the footsloggers were on flat land and in the open, men dropped on all sides. Flesh and blood could stand no more and the 2nd Battalion pulled back.

Leap-frogging over the 2nd Battalion, the 3rd Battalion moved into position for the river assault. On November 5th at 2 A.M., Company *I* followed Captain E. C. Allworth over in the first successful attempt. This unit was reinforced by the remainder of the 3rd Battalion in successive waves . . . the first Allied troops over the Meuse. (For this daring action, Captain Allworth received the *Congressional Medal of Honor* and Company *I* was cited by the U.S. Army.)

Against greatly superior odds, the 60th Infantry drove back a dumbfounded enemy. Up the cliffs and through the bridgehead poured the regiment. By repeated acts of bravery and excellent teamwork, the doughboys cut a nine-mile path over ridges, mountains, valleys, hamlets and woods toward ghostly Foret-de-Woevre. Mud, rain, rugged terrain, fatigue and a ferocious enemy defense failed to halt the American drive.

Word was received that the Kaiser had abdicated and fled to Holland. The tremendous struggle was nearing an end. On November 10th just after 1 A.M., the 60th Infantry began its last assault of the war—through the Foret-de-Woevre, an "impenetrable everglade of swamps, wood and undergrowth, cut by frequent muddy trails and roads." Roads to the rear were jammed with traffic; heavy artillery impeded the 60th's advance, but even in the jungle of the Woevre Forest, signs of victory were beginning to bear fruit.

Mile-after-mile the Germans retreated, leaving their soup kitchens in the midst of meal preparation; their weapons and supplies lay nearby. Following at close heel was the persistent 60th Infantry, chopping through brush and briar—giving the enemy little respite. Germany later would claim that the *home-front* lost the war, but the men of the Woevre knew otherwise.

Now it was the morning of November 11, 1918. The 60th Infantry Regiment was preparing to attack the heights of Juvigny when the joyous news of *Armistice* flashed across the front. Rifle fire stopped and the whining shells dropped no more. A deathly silence penetrated the air. It was over . . . no more killing . . . no more dying . . . peace!

The signing of an armistice meant many things to many people. Allied statesmen declared the war literally had ended: Prussian career militarists looked upon the peace as a lull between battles. They wanted time to rebuild and prepare for another war.

Doughboys looked for immediate passage home, and mothers wept tears of joy. In a German military hospital lay an Austrian named Adolf Hitler; his war was just beginning!

* * * *

YET America had not finished with Germany. Before the war actually could end, a treaty of peace was necessary. The armistice was only for an initial period of thirty days; moreover, victors must occupy and no exception was to be made of Germany. The 39th and 47th Infantries were moved to the Moselle valley while troops of the 60th Infantry took over a portion of the Luxembourg border as their zone.

In December, the 4th Division was sent to guard the Rhine River. First of all American units to reach the famous waterway was the 39th Infantry Regiment, and soon both the 47th and 39th Infantries were guarding the Ludendorff Railway Bridge at Remagen. Paradoxically, it was here during the spring of 1945, that the modern versions of these regiments were to expand the Remagen Bridgehead.

For a while Germany refused to sign the terms of peace. Troops were placed on a war footing and General Pershing issued an ultimatum. Then the Germans decided to sign and occupation ended for the 39th, 47th and 60th Infantries. During the summer of 1919, the regiments sailed home.

OCCUPYING GERMANY (DECEMBER 1918)

Under the National Defense Act of 1920, the United States Army was cut in size and on September 21, 1921, the future regiments of the Ninth Infantry Division were inactivated. In terminating their World War I careers, the trio could be proud of the part they had played in the victory. The 39th and 47th Infantries counted battle streamers for Aisne-Marne, Meuse-Argonne, Lorraine, St. Mihiel and Champagne. There were forty-four *Distinguished Service Crosses* awarded to men of the 47th; the 39th had won the French *Croix-de-Guerre with Gold Star.* Of the 5,330 officers and men who had gone into battle with the 47th Infantry 2,747 were casualties. As for the fighting men of the 60th Infantry, they could boast of streamers for St. Mihiel, Meuse-Argonne, Alsace and Lorraine. Two *Congressional Medal of Honor* winners came from their ranks and their Company *I* was cited for one of the outstanding river crossings of modern times.

* * * *

MONTHS rolled by and in 1923 the Ninth Infantry Division was placed on active reserve. But few people then thought that the Ninth would participate in a second war against German aggression. For those were times of *square* divisions, wrap-leggins, campaign hats and *Model-T Fords.* America had fought the *war to end all wars,* Germany was licked. Everyone knew that. How could the *Fatherland* ever hope to rise again? That same question was being asked in Germany . . . and an answer was found!

THE OCTOFOIL

SHOULDER sleeve insignia became official for all units after the first world war and in 1923, the Ninth Infantry Division—with War Department approval—adopted the *Octofoil* as its *patch.* The selection was a unique one, as the design dated back to the 15th Century, when it was customary for each son to have an individual mark of distinction.

Perhaps *Octo,* meaning eight, is a bit confusing to many when speaking of the Ninth Division. But in foiling there are eight foils (positions) and heraldic rules gave the *Octofoil* to the ninth son, since it was symbolic of his being surrounded by eight brothers; which is an explanation of why this eight-petaled insignia is correct for the Ninth Regular Army Division.

The design chosen for the Ninth consists of a red quatre-foil atop a blue quatrefoil, with a white center. The red stands for the artillery, the blue for the infantry and the white denotes the color of numerals found on division flags. Surrounding the Octofoil is a rim of olive drab—symbolic as nothing else of the U.S. Army.

Section I photography credits: Official
U. S. Army Signal Corps Photos.

Section II

Recalled To Arms

1940-1942

BLITZKRIEG and broken treaties were Germany's answer to the war-weary world of the 1930's. Burdened with domestic troubles and disarmament, the Allies of World War I hopelessly stood by, watching aggression on the march. For them, *peace at any price* was preferable to war.

Nazi Germany and her Axis friends took full advantage of that preference. Dictator Adolf Hitler soon possessed a mechanized army and a modern air force which converted the defeated German nation of 1918 into the acknowledged military power of Europe. Benito Mussolini showed his true colors by invading Ethiopia. World-defiant Japan was beginning its long struggle to save *China from the Chinese*. With one of the world's largest navies and a veteran army of several million troops, emperor-worshipping Japanese were the dominant power in the Far East. The stage was set for an explosion. It came in 1939, just twenty-one years after *the war to end all wars*.

Bluff and power diplomacy had placed Austria and Czechoslovakia under the heel of Germany—without a shot being fired. To gain time for the construction of defenses, Soviet Russia signed a non-aggression pact with Nazi Germany. Hitler was ready at last to strike with hot steel and death.

On the historic morning of September 1, 1939, black German boots went on the march. Ill-prepared Poland saw her cities devastated, her sons and daughters slaughtered by the thousands. England and France declared war on Germany on September 3rd, but this was a hollow gesture. By the end of the month resistance in Poland was at an end. Even the Nazis could not have foreseen the complete weakness of the Allies, who offered little help to beleaguered Poland—save sympathy.

With the opening of war in Europe, the United States Army tried desperately to obtain appropriations for modernization and increased manpower. Only 174,000 men (including the Air Force) were on active duty in the outmoded American Army. Small countries, like Roumania and Belgium, could boast of larger armies than that of the United States. Behind two oceans and a wall of isolationism the American people had felt secure. Yet while *potentially* great in strength, in *actual* arms and men the United States was but a third-rate power.

The fall of France and the British evacuation at Dunkirk, during the late spring of 1940, served to awaken the people of America. War was knocking at their door with loud thumps. Congress passed a law raising the authorized strength of the Army to 375,000. Under the provisions of this act the War Department called up the last of its Regular Army divisions, the Ninth, on July 20, 1940. It wasn't to be an old style *square* division, but one of the new streamlined *triangular* divisions.. Thus, with the reactivation of the Ninth Infantry Division on August 1, 1940, was born a new kind of army.

When the cadre for the Ninth Infantry Division arrived at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, everyone envisioned a well-appointed camp. Certainly the largest artillery post in the world would have permanent barracks and modern conveniences. But the founders of the Ninth were in for a rude shock.

The reactivated Ninth Infantry Division was composed originally of the 39th, 47th and 60th Infantry Regiments, 26th and 34th Field Artillery Regiments, 15th Engineer (Combat) Battalion, Division Headquarters, Headquarters and Military Police Company, Ninth Signal Company, Ninth Reconnaissance Troop, Ninth Quartermaster Battalion (later company) and Ninth Medical Battalion. Several weeks later, the artillery regiments were reorganized. They became the 26th, 34th, 60th and 84th Field Artillery Battalions and Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, Ninth Division Artillery. The veteran 6th Field Artillery Band was redesignated the Ninth Division Artillery Band. Addition of the 709th Ordnance Company completed the Division's permanently assigned units.

While there *were* permanent buildings to house a normal complement of 4,000 officers and men, the new Ninth Division was to begin life in a tent city. Barracks were promised in the immediate future. However, Federal laws required certain bidding procedures prior to construction. Thus the soldiers were greeted by a desolate, insect-infested tract of sand. Brush and sand pines were the only permanent fixtures—and these had to be removed to make way for pyramidal tents.

The first men to arrive for the Ninth were 93 Regular Army men from the 2nd Infantry Regiment at Camp Custer, Michigan. Sergeant John J. Waldrop was the number one registrant, checking in at 6 A.M. on the morning of August 1st. Shortly afterward, Sergeants Raymond Duckworth and Ralph Bogle (later Captain) followed Waldrop into the future home of the Ninth.

By August 2nd all 93 men from Custer were in the area, and the 39th Infantry Regiment was formed. As the days passed, more and more cadremen arrived. Within three weeks the soldiers numbered 1,881 and hailed from 24 states . . . this group formed the framework upon which the remaining units of the Division were built.

The immediate task at hand was to swing axes on the stands of pine, and clear space for erecting an elaborate tent city. There were many hardships to overcome. Everything, from roads to sanitary facilities had to be built by the new Division. A man had to feel mighty dirty to take a shower, too. The nearest showers were three walking miles distant, at a neighboring CCC camp. In the Division area no hot water was available; it would not be until November.

Tents were erected in orderly rows, only to be burned down at the average rate of one per day. Usually, the fires broke out during the night and men were routed from hard-earned slumbers to battle a raging inferno of canvas and wood. In spite of evidence to the contrary, one private claims to this day that the fires were officially planned to keep the men alert.

* * * *

THE Ninth's first commander at Fort Bragg was Colonel Charles B. Elliot. Here was a rough and ready campaigner with forty years of service. He had risen through the ranks from private and could wear the *D.S.C., Silver Star, Purple Heart* and *French Legion of Honor*. Under his initial supervision the Division grew, and the area became a real home under canvas.

Five weeks of organizing and building showed great results. But it was hard, dirty work. Without ample tools and equipment, and facing a thankless job, men of the Ninth Division tackled nature. Sweat and labor cleared trees and brush, built roads, set up the tent city, constructed latrines and bathhouses. Some companies even adorned their tents with name-plates and house-numbers.

As the manual duties of the founders dwindled, they were joined by thousands of raw recruits . . . all volunteers. Some of the new men had no uniforms, no records and no inoculations. Many rookies had to be drilled in civilian clothes. Upon receiving these new men, the old-timers forgot their own problems; there was a Division to build!

Soon the troops had their own 12-page newspaper, movies, athletics and a rustic type of army town—complete with streets and walks. Even swings were provided for those desiring such amusement, although rain frequently intervened in most outdoor pleasure.

The Divisional area was several miles south of the main post, off Fort Bragg Road. This main post always had been considered an excellent assignment for Regular Army officers and non-coms. Usually 4,000 to 5,000 soldiers manned this typically southern post, which was named for a Confederate general.

Fayetteville, nearby town of 18,000, was both picturesque and old . . . and was populated with the descendants of Scotch pioneers. Without the national emergency Fayetteville might have remained simple and native. Unfortunately the successful drive of Hitler's legions through Europe had great repercussions.

Adolf Hitler was changing many things, including the appearance of Fort Bragg. Hewn out of the scrub oak and sandy fields of the largest of artillery posts, was to be a cantonment destined to hold 67,000 men in uniform. A great and costly project of building had begun. It turned out to be something so enormous that it upset the economy of Fayetteville, Raleigh and a fifty-mile area surrounding Fort Bragg.

As soon as contracts were approved, mass-production building was given a go-ahead signal. The Army wanted to have its barracks completed before winter's cold set in. This called for rapidity and thousands of workmen. Before long the crews of carpenters and electricians had multiplied so greatly that soldiers wryly remarked that there were more construction men than soldiers at Fort Bragg!

* * * *

WITHIN a short period over 9,000 men had reported to the new Division. The 15th Engineers had constructed roads and made clearings for training. Artillery and rifle ranges were made ready, and recruits commenced learning the finer points of actual firing. Sharing of minor hardships had welded the men closer—a winning team was in formation.

Tragedy, however, was to strike the Division early. On September 13, 1940, Brigadier General Francis W. Honeycutt arrived from Fort Stotsenburg, Philippine Islands, to become the reactivated Ninth's first commanding general. With this change Colonel Elliot became Division chief of staff. Seven days after assuming command, General Honeycutt was killed in an airplane accident near Woodbine, Georgia. He was remembered in the tradition of the Army. The first memorial field of the new Division was named in his honor, as was Honeycutt Place in Fayetteville, a housing project for non-commissioned officers and their families.

After the untimely passing of its first general, the Ninth was placed under the leadership of Brigadier General Rene E. DeRussey Hoyle, who had arrived to command the Division Artillery.

It was in September, too, that the worst electrical storm in modern Carolina history hit Fort Bragg. Lightning struck and thunder roared. The tent city was beaten by wind and incessant rain, and a miniature flood covered the roads. Fury of the storm had disrupted the lighting system . . . the misery of wet clothes and personal belongings was widespread. Here was certainly a test of the morale and spirit of the Ninth Infantry Division.

But the men of the Division were more than equal to the catastrophe. During the black of night they sloshed through puddles of water to their canteens. Under the light of candles they gathered in groups and sang. Some had guitars to spark their songs, others just sang. They could have huddled inside their wet pyramidals and counted their sorrows, but these soldiers mastered an unpleasant situation. "At least no one will have to walk three miles for *these* showers," laughed many.

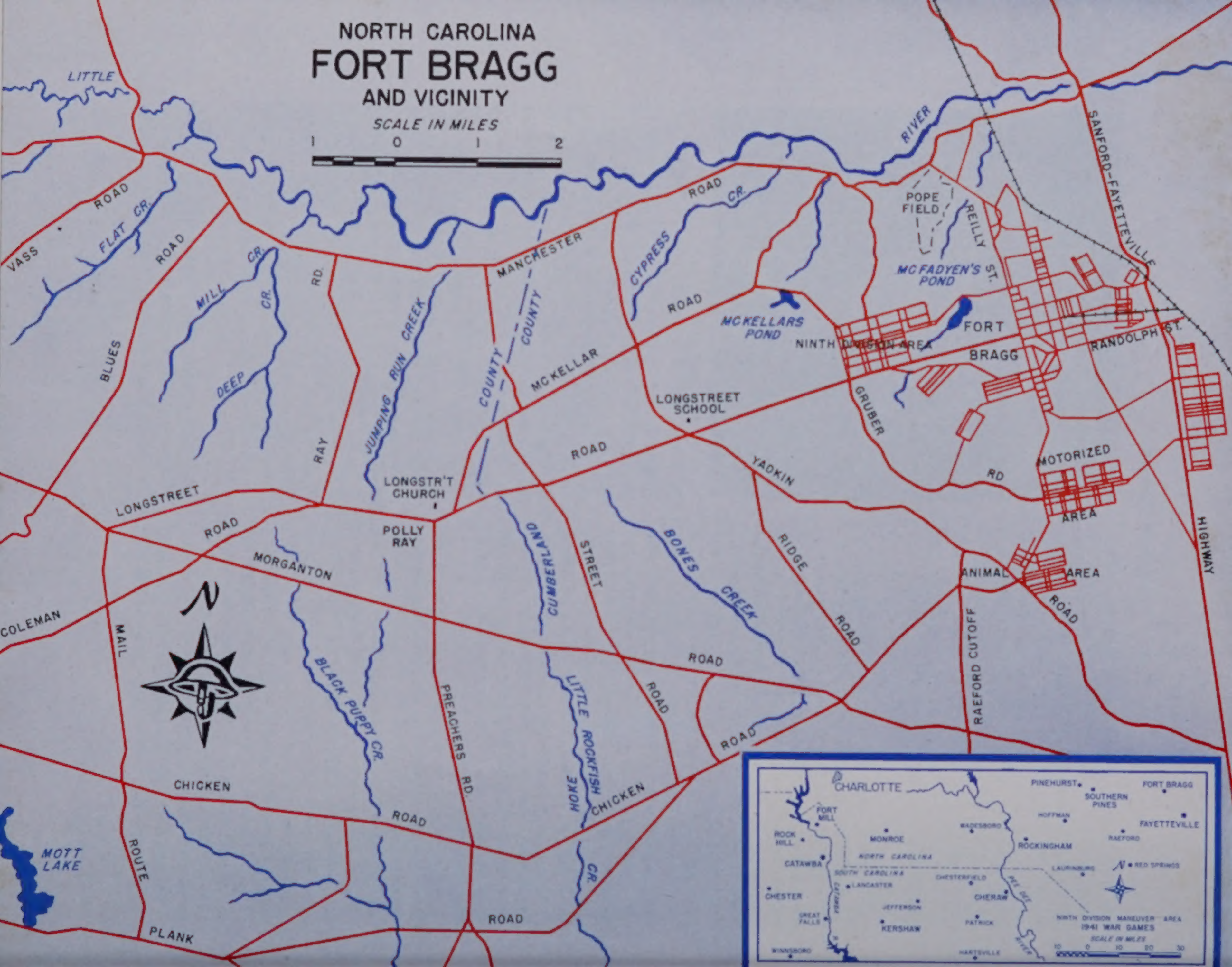
GENERAL HONEYCUTT

That spirit never left the Ninth, fortunately. Out of the sweat, midnight lamp-burning, initiative and continuous training of a handful grew a mighty Division. The reservists and five-week trainees became more expert. The regulars became superb.

October passed, and by November the Division began to prepare for eventual movement into more permanent quarters. Hopes were high that this would be soon. The cutting winter wind and the freezing mornings made *reveille* a tragic thought. Before the Ninth was to move into its new area, however, many things were to happen.

* * * *

COMMANDING officers changed like the time of day during the first months of reactivation. At first captains commanded regiments, then majors


NORTH CAROLINA
FORT BRAGG
AND VICINITY
SCALE IN MILES
1 0 1 2
LITTLE
RIVER
VASS
ROAD
FLAT CR.
ROAD
MILL
CR.
CR.
DEEP
BLUES
RD.
RAY
JUMPING RUN CREEK
MANCHESTER
COUNTY
COUNTY
ROAD
CYPRESS
CR.
ROAD
MC KELLAR
MC KELLARS POND
POPE FIELD
REILLY ST.
MC FADYEN'S POND
NINTH DIVISION AREA
FORT
BRAGG
RANDOLPH ST.
SANFORD-FAYETTEVILLE
LONGSTREET SCHOOL
GRUBER
ROAD
YADKIN
MOTORIZED
RD
AREA
LONGSTREET
ROAD
LONGSTR'T CHURCH
POLLY RAY
MORGANTON
CUMBERLAND
STREET
BONES
CREEK
RIDGE
ROAD
ANIMAL
AREA
ROAD
HIGHWAY
COLEMAN
MAIL
N
BLACK PUPPY CR.
PREACHERS RD.
LITTLE ROCKFISH
HOKE
ROAD
ROAD
ROAD
RAEFORD CUTOFF
CHICKEN
ROAD
CHICKEN
MOTT LAKE
ROUTE
PLANK
ROAD
CR.
CHARLOTTE
FORT MILL
ROCK HILL
CATAWBA
CHESTER
GREAT FALLS
WINNSBORO
MONROE
NORTH CAROLINA
SOUTH CAROLINA
LANCASTER
CATAWBA
JEFFERSON
KERSHAW
WADESBORO
CHESTERFIELD
CHERAW
PATRICK
HARTSVILLE
PEE DEE
RIVER
ROCKINGHAM
PINEHURST
SOUTHERN PINES
HOFFMAN
FORT BRAGG
FAYETTEVILLE
RAEFORD
LAURINBURG
N
RED SPRINGS
NINTH DIVISION MANEUVER AREA
1941 WAR GAMES
SCALE IN MILES
10 0 10 20 30

and finally lieutenant colonels. The latter usually were promoted to full colonel; some attained the rank of general officer.

Among the real soldiers who influenced the course of the Ninth Division was Colonel (Major General) Frank C. Mahin. As a lieutenant colonel he succeeded Major Esden to the command of the 60th Infantry Regiment, on September 2, 1940. Colonel Mahin was one of the first *immortals* of the Ninth, respected and admired by both the men and officers.

During the first World War, he was badly wounded and gassed. For fourteen months, he had lain in a base hospital. The terrific slaughter of inexperienced soldiers stuck in his memory, and Colonel Mahin was determined that the men of the 60th Infantry would not suffer through ignorance. He pioneered the theory of firing weapons during the first week of training. By knowing immediately the feel and construction of a rifle, a soldier would have a much better chance of living.

Colonel Mahin's ideas spread. On Sunday morning, November 10, 1940, an article by the local military correspondent of the Raleigh *News and Observer* appeared. It was captioned, "They're Streamlining Training at Fort Bragg." The story told of Private Stanley August Lybek, a former Wisconsin tractor driver who was being transformed into a soldier in rapid fashion. His training sergeant was the famous E. F. Groves, whose handling of recruits made him both a well-known instructor and a first sergeant.

Lybek was one of the new Ninth Division recruits clad in sweat-covered blue denim fatigues and learning the rudiments of military life. Whereas the Army once had supported a theory that it would take three years to produce a fighting man, it was now necessary to accomplish the same results in one year.

The War Department knew that the peace of America was likely to explode at any minute. It had been trying to obtain some sort of Selective Service Act to augment the Regular Army and National Guard with one year trainees. Voluntary enlistments were so irregular and slow that such a law seemed the only solution.

Then Germany began the air Battle of Britain. No one knew how long that island kingdom could withstand a full-scale *Luftwaffe* assault, and the Atlantic Ocean suddenly looked much smaller. Although centuries of antagonism toward peacetime conscription stood in the way, Congress finally passed the first Selective Service Act during the fall of 1940. It provided for an Army of the United States to consist of 500,000 men in the Regular Army—federalizing a National Guard of 270,000 and selecting 630,000 young Americans for one year of training.

There was only one way to train this vast new army: split the experts and spread them throughout the United States. On November 13, 1940, the War Department announced its plans for carrying out the new law. Camps and reception centers were named and the famous fishbowl drawing was held. A greeting from the President followed:

> *Having submitted yourself to a local board composed of your neighbors for the purpose of determining your availability for training and service in the land or naval forces of the United States, you are hereby notified that you have now been selected for training and service therein.*

The wisdom of the draft was proved during the year that followed. Most of America's armies have been raised *after* an enemy had struck. Sometimes, as in World War I, the United States was almost defeated before it could train and ship a large enough army to the field. For once the American Army was to be fairly large in time of peace.

* * * *

DURING early November, the Ninth greeted the the man who was a symbol of the changed Army. He led the Division as he would a football team until it was acclaimed second to none. Under his direction Fort Bragg was the first American Army camp to have super-highways. Rules and regulations were forgotten temporarily to allow for speedy construction of service clubs, theaters and barracks . . . Fort Bragg became the model military camp of the United States.

The leader was Major General (General) Jacob Louk Devers, who joined the post as both commanding general of the Ninth and of Fort Bragg. At 53 he was the youngest major general in the U.S. Army. President Franklin D. Roosevelt personally had chosen him to find bases for the United States in the highly-publicized *Fifty Destroyer-Base Exchange* with England.

General Devers was a highly successful but unorthodox commander. His youthful complexion and physique belied his age. The word *impossible* was not in his vocabulary . . . cutting of *red tape* was encouraged, as was the unusual.

One day that marks the beginning of the Ninth as a top-flight division, was the Saturday of its first Divisional review. Colonel Mahin had assembled the marchers on November 16, 1940. This was the first time General Devers had seen the Division as a whole. Moreover, it was the first time that any of the newly activated divisions of the expanding Army had held a formal review.

When the commanding general arrived upon the field he found an extremely cold day. A 30-mile-an-hour wind whipped across the clearing. The *old man* was mighty glad to be wearing his overcoat. But as he looked down the lines of GIs he saw old uniforms. Some were made for the CCC; others were model 1917's; few fit their wearers. Most of the soldiers were in their shirtsleeves, as blouses (coats) and overcoats were unavailable. When General Devers saw the Division wearing such inadequate clothing he was amazed. Off went his overcoat, he flung it to one side. If the men could make the parade in their shirtsleeves so could their general. For one hour and a half he stood in the cold, reviewing the troops.

The legends of the general who wore breeches and boots began. Another *immortal* was added to a growing list by men who could sense a real leader. But their commander was not finished; the troops had been living in tents without a vestige of hot water. In his first speech before 9,000 shivering soldiers General Devers said:

"You men have put on a good show. You look like soldiers. This is a fine division and it will be a great division. I've been down through your area in the two days I've been here and there is one thing I want to tell you. Next Saturday night you can have a hot bath. There will be heaters for water down there in your bathhouses. I don't know where I'll get them, but you will have a hot bath."

GENERAL DEVERS ▶

Sure enough, there were hot baths on Saturday! It was the first touch of hot water for some men in over three months. Probably several rules had been broken to get those boilers down to the bathhouses, but the general had taken care of his men.

* * * *

WARTIME'S financial boom now had hit the Fort Bragg area. Carpenters, painters and electricians were averaging one dollar an hour. The bus fare (round trip) to Fayetteville was forty cents, and to a private drawing twenty-one dollars monthly, that was quite a sum. Food prices rose, and small shops mushroomed to reap the rich harvest following a government payday. A steady influx of workers crowded into the small towns surrounding the camp. When the building program at Fort Bragg was completed, the post numbered third-largest among the communities of North Carolina.

Married soldiers found it almost impossible to rent a room, apartment or house off the post. It was hard for men living in the tented area to make 6:30 A.M. formations, but it was even harder on non-coms and officers who had to drive up to fifty miles for the same formation. These commuters lived wherever they could, at Pinehurst, Southern Pines and within a fifty-mile radius of Fort Bragg.

. . . the Ninth Division will move tomorrow marching the five miles that separate the sprawling tented area and the southeast tip of the reservation to the newly-completed division barracks, and so become not only the first of the expanding Army's new divisions to appear in a formal review but also the first to move into permanent barracks.

—Raleigh News and Observer.

Weather had held up the Division's moving on December 15th. That night, however, fires were lit in barrack furnaces, and cook stoves in the mess halls were warmed. Construction was completed. As the men began arriving the following day, they beamed happy glances at the superb change in their existence. The cold of December had made tent-life uncomfortable.

The movement was not completed immediately; but soon the entire Division was situated in its new four-million-dollar cantonment area, two miles southwest of the main post on Ninth Division and Long-street roads. Hot baths, real shelter and glass windows seemed too good to be true. There were showers and heat—and little chance that water would inundate one's bed during the night.

Being shifted into more suitable quarters was not the only Christmas present for the men of the Ninth. Holiday furloughs were granted to those who could be spared from duty, and those who remained at Fort Bragg were able to feast themselves upon a fine Yuletide dinner.

Few of the soldiers who ushered in the New Year of 1941 thought of war. January meant the return of training, lectures, calisthenics and other *tortures*. Back, too, was that old bogey of the military world, *KP*. GIs at Fort Bragg sorrowfully nicknamed the chore *Keep Peeling*.

* * * *

ON January 3rd General Devers placed the camp on a wartime footing. Wednesday afternoon no longer meant time off, as a 44-hour training program had to get under way. Social functions were limited to weekends only; however, parades and reviews for visiting persons of importance continued. Units of the Ninth participated in the inaugural parade of North Carolina's new Governor; and Ambassador Josephus Daniels, United States envoy to Mexico, visited the Division.

Women started *joining* the Division about this time. Mrs. Emma J. Foster, of Mt. Airy, was appointed senior hostess for the Ninth Division Service Club, guest house and library. She was assisted by Miss Eleanor Barr, of Greenville, Mrs. Dorothy McFarland, of High Point, and Mrs. R. E. Williams, of Clinton. These ladies were selected from amongst 700 applicants. With the staffing of extra facilities, life was a bit more pleasant for GIs spending an evening in camp.

The Ninth Division had approximately 9,681 officers and men in the cantonment area. Construction had been completed in 109 days at a cost of $4,419,018.00. Originally planned for 8,000 men, the space finally was increased to hold 14,000. The Ninth Division area consisted of 586 buildings, including 253 *sixty-three man* barracks, 80 mess halls, 80 company administration buildings, 11 infirmaries, 10 post exchanges, 3 theaters, 2 fire stations, 5 recreation buildings, a post office and other structures.

PART OF NINTH'S NEW CANTONMENT AREA

Selectees began arriving during the month of January. For the most part they were from New York and New Jersey. It was January 16, 1941, when Captain (Colonel) Van H. Bond of the 60th Infantry brought back the first 500 men from Camp Upton, New York. They were a bewildered, sad-faced group of individuals, stemming from every type of family, job and background. An additional 500 recruits arrived on the 17th from Camp Dix.

The flow of selectees continued and hard-bitten regulars immediately entered into the task of *zeroing-in* the novices. Thirteen weeks of basic training were instituted, with a variety of subjects featured. Most of the new men soon caught the spirit of the Division. However, some objected to their veteran instructors, whose language was anything but Oxonian.

January was a full month. One battery of Divarty was selected to parade for the third term inauguration of President Roosevelt. The Division boxing team—known as the *Fighting Ninth*—overcame a measles outbreak to win the local *Golden Gloves* tournament. Lt. General Hugh A. Drum (First Army commander) visited the Division during a whirlwind inspection tour, and later in an impressive ceremony, the Ninth dedicated its first flagpole.

Soon some of the men were able to report home on what they had learned. Special passes were issued over Washington's Birthday weekend, when about 500 members of the Ninth left for New York and Philadelphia aboard chartered Queens City busses. Every aid was furnished by the government, with state police escorts meeting the busses at each state boundary, and convoying the soldiers to the next one.

* * * *

ON March 18th General Drum conducted a CPX (Command Post Exercise) for the Division and the Ninth reacted well in its first big test. When he left, he'd decided that the Ninth was one of the best divisions in the First Army.

Amusing situations were always cropping up at the wrong times. At the Division's first full parade on Honeycutt Field, everyone started off with a serious expression upon his face. The date was March 22, 1941. Over 14,000 members of the Division rolled past in review. A terrific cloud of dust accompanied the marchers, particularly the mounted units.

Then it happened. A truck (with howitzer attached) became stalled in front of the reviewing stand. After a slightly embarrassing hesitation the red-faced crew quickly regained their senses. They jumped down onto the dusty field, and with a *heave-ho* pushed the truck and gun past the onlooking generals. The parade kept streaming by, to the approving smiles of the reviewing officers.

When the first recruits joined the Ninth under the Selective Service Act, they discovered that life was governed by bugle calls. In Company "B", 47th Infantry, the new arrivals were told to stand at attention (fall-in) whenever they heard a strange call. One day practically all of the company heard a call and fell-in. A few of the old-timers grabbed mess kits and took off—for chow. It was MESS CALL!

As the Division and Fort Bragg expanded, prices reached unbelievably high levels. Rentals were skyrocketing as well. One lieutenant was renting a *cow shed* at forty dollars per month! An investigation was started, but this aided little.

Then the crisp spring weather warmed up to summer. The men of the Ninth changed into khaki uniforms and began duty at 6 A.M. instead of the usual 6:30 A.M. Longer evenings featured the ever-popular Service Club dances, with girl partners from the *Ninth Division Defense Clubs.* And there were the USO shows. Movie-singer Alan Jones and song and dance-girl Ginger Harmon performed for the Ninth with such a troupe.

Suntan weather meant more outdoor training, too. Despite the benefit of wooden barracks, the Division was to spend more time outdoors than in. On the first day of June, Colonel Mahin's reinforced 60th Combat Team (60th Infantry Regiment, 34th and 60th Field Artillery Battalions and one-half of the Ninth Reconnaisance Troop) left by 741-vehicle motor convoy for the vicinity of Bowling Green, Virginia. They were to engage in a two-day maneuver with the 44th (National Guard) Division.

Although the regiment had been in training only five months, it outmaneuvered the 44th. With only 4,481 men, the 60th C.T. did a superb job of *defeating* the Guardsmen who had over 15,400 troops. This was the first large combat-field problem for the Ninth and won great national praise.

Few regiments in peacetime have been through such a campaign in one week as have the troops of the Sixtieth Combat team which went 276 miles to Virginia last week, met and confused the entire Forty-fourth Division, came home without denting a fender of their 741 vehicles, and that night went out on the reservation here, on schedule, to take part in more maneuvers.

—New York TIMES.

At the end of June the entire Ninth began its first Divisional war games. Already two of the regiments had received nicknames. Colonel William R. Schmidt's 39th was called *The Fighting Falcons,* and the 60th termed *The Go-Devils.*

As the field exercises continued the weather became increasingly hot. Temperatures of 99 degrees and more were recorded. Then came the well-remembered day in July, when the sun's rays measured 130 degrees on the thermometer. Glassy-eyed doughboys of Colonel Sam Gibson's 47th Infantry completed a "heartbreaking road march of 27 miles, at a cadence of 112 (steps) per minute."

The July 5th reassignment of Colonel Elliot seemed to signal the great change in veteran personnel that was to hit the Ninth Division. First, 172 men were chosen from a large group of volunteers and sent to paratroop training. For privates this transfer meant thirty dollars monthly salary and fifty dollars *jump pay,* after successful completion of the course. That was far more than twenty-one dollars per month!

A mixed feeling of sadness and surprise hit the Division next. The Army announced that General Devers was to command its entire Armored Force. While the men of the Ninth were happy over the general's promotion, they were exceedingly sorry to lose his leadership. Many soldiers wanted to follow General Devers to the Armored Force . . . only a few could. By special request the popular commander was able to stay with the Ninth until its first reactivation anniversary on August 1st.

* * * *

THE first anniversary of the Ninth's reactivation caused a great many speeches. None, however, seemed to sum up the events of the past year as well as a short talk by Mayor J. Scott McFadyen of Fayetteville: "This year has seen the Ninth Division grown from a handful of cadremen to one of the best trained and most powerful organizations in the United States Army. . . ."

Evidence of this statement was everywhere. It was on the faces of the men, as they marched by the cheering crowds. It showed in their husky frames and handling of equipment.

Since this was the last parade that General Devers would review as commander of the Ninth, all units were anxious to make a good showing. The general stood upon a raised reviewing platform, resplendent in his boots and breeches—presenting a neat, soldierly appearance. But as the new equipment rolled by the reviewing stands, another of those mechanical errors marred a Division parade.

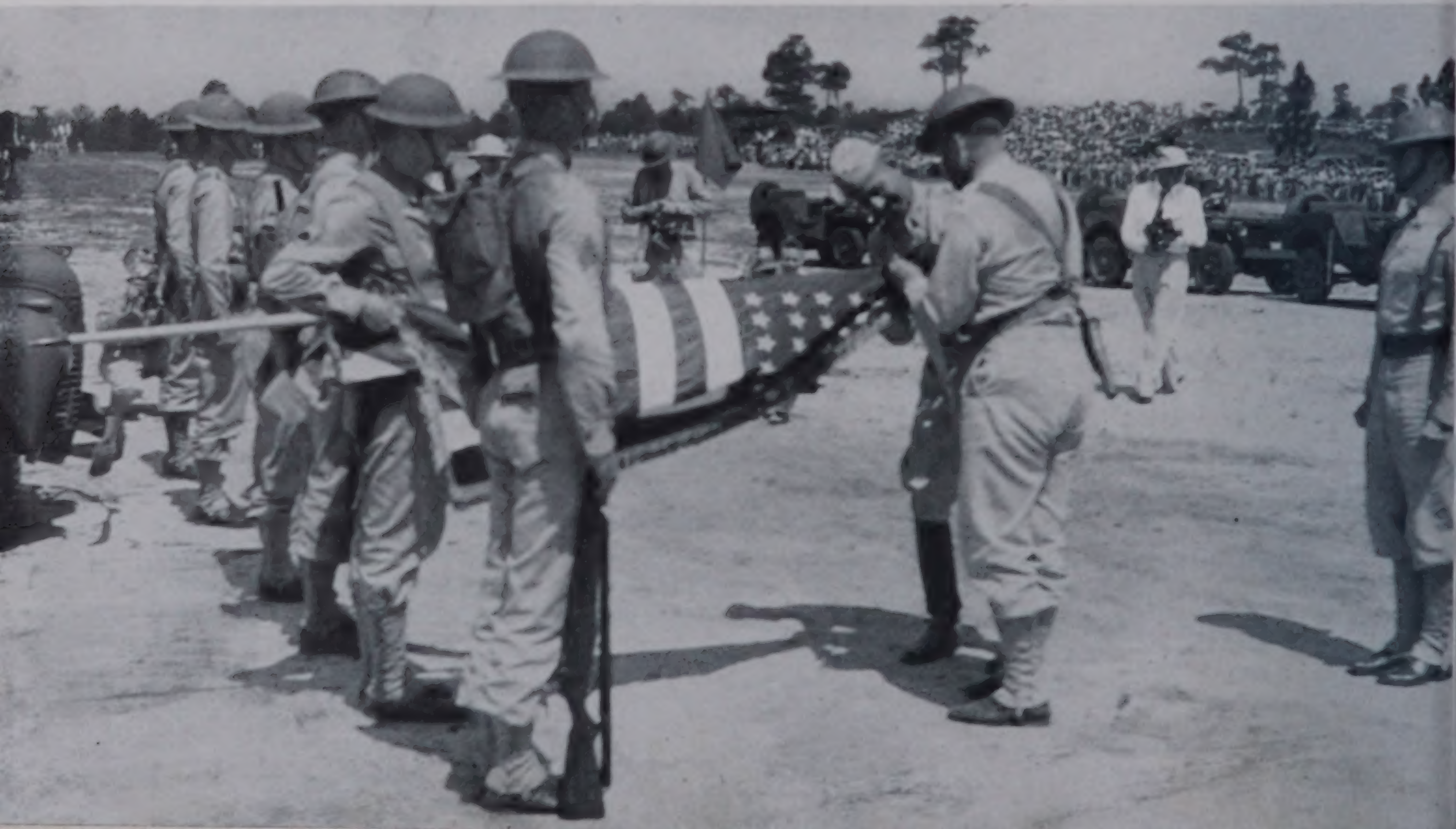
Brand new dump trucks of the 15th Engineer Battalion were on display and filled with personnel. Just as the vehicles were passing General Devers, one of the drivers through inexperience kicked a wrong lever. The dumping portion of the truck went into action. In a flash a pile of surprised engineers was dropped in front of an equally surprised general!

As the men of the Ninth Division lined the curbs of their area on August 2nd, General and Mrs. Devers left for Fort Knox, Kentucky. Heartfelt best wishes were on each man's face for the major general who had done so much for the Ninth Division. At this time Brigadier General R. E. D. Hoyle relinquished the command of the Ninth Division Artillery and became Division commander. Shortly thereafter, Colonel (Major General) S. LeRoy Irwin assumed command of the Artillery.

* * * *

WHILE the Ninth Division was celebrating on August 1st, the people of Europe definitely were not. From the northernmost tip of Norway to the southernmost portions of Greece, Adolf Hitler was either undisputed master or conqueror. Smashing at the gates of Moscow was a seemingly invincible *Wehrmacht*. For all purposes the Nazi juggernaut had reached its peak of power. Nothing had withstood the onslaughts of its *Panzer* divisions, *Luftwaffe* and fanatical *S.S.* Troops. Nothing, that is, except the stubborn British Empire and a rapidly

ORGANIZATION DAY: 60th RECEIVES STREAMER FOR "COMBAT EXCELLENCE"



growing underground movement on the continent of Europe.

Italy entered the war on the side of Germany after France had been overrun. England appeared next on the growing list. Two-hundred thousand Italian desert veterans waged successful war against the British in Egypt and Somaliland. Then by a series of swift assaults, General Sir Archibald Wavell's small composite force drove back the *envoys from Rome*. Only two British divisions attacked a vastly superior enemy, and the *Desert Rats* bagged 130,000 Italian prisoners against their own casualty list of 1,800.

Trouble intervened, however, to halt this temporary success. Hitler sent his armies reeling through the Balkans and the British were obliged to dispatch one-half of their tiny desert army to aid Greece. Meanwhile, an excellently trained and well disciplined *Afrika Korps* replaced the badly-mauled Italians facing Wavell.

More trouble plagued the hard-pressed British. It came from the pro-Axis populations of Iraq, Iran, Syria and Egypt, and from the Arabs in the Holy Land. Moreover, German submarines aided the *Nazi total war* by sinking ships almost as fast as the United States and England could build them. Japan was bellicose, too. She waved her *Samurai* swords at the world, threatening all non-Asiatics with *Japanese Peace*. American ships were machine-gunned in Chinese waters and General MacArthur secretly prepared the fortress island of Corregidor for any eventuality.

After Dunkirk the United States poured forth an arsenal of weapons. From that time until final victory, more and more arms, ammunition, food, tanks and planes were rushed to the United Kingdom. Ships were transferred (lent) to England, as were large sums of money.

Hitler had attacked Russia during June of 1941. By the end of July the Soviet Union appeared destined to follow the rest of Europe under the heel of Nazi tyranny. Over *one million* Russian fighting men were encircled; hundreds of thousands were killed and wounded. All Germany was jubilant. It looked as if the *Fuehrer* and his German *supermen* had the world by the tail. Only two great powers remained to dispute the world domination program of the Axis, the United States and Great Britain. If the Americans were eliminated, England might well fall. If the British were forced to surrender, the Western Hemisphere would be isolated and the United States would be forced to deal with a world controlled by Germany and Japan. Thus one thought struck the Axis high commands simultaneously:

> *Why not strike before the growing might of the United States becomes too powerful? . . . WHY NOT?*

* * * *

GREAT changes were to influence the Ninth Division during its second year of re-activation. Most of the founding cadre were to leave and form other divisions. Methods of training were to improve, and an ever-increasing amount of time was to be spent away from the comforts of camp.

On August 4, 1941, Colonel (Lt. General) Alexander M. Patch of the 47th Infantry Regiment was appointed Brigadier General in charge of Camp Croft, South Carolina. He later was to lead troops in the Pacific and the Seventh Army in Europe. General Patch was typical of both the officers *and* men of the Ninth. The Fort Bragg *POST* described him aptly: *. . . as a brisk, battle-wise soldier, whose tall, lean appearance never failed to command respect and loyalty.*

Upon taking the oath of rank before the assembled 47th Infantry, General Patch said, "It is always the organization that makes the General, and not the officer who makes the organiation. All that I now am and the rewards which I have recently received can be attributed to the enlisted men of this regiment."

With the coming of cooler weather the pace of training was stepped up. Late August found the Ninth on maneuvers during a steady drizzle, which kept everyone feeling miserable. Opposing the Division was a *Blue Force*, composed of 30th Infantry Division troops from Fort Jackson, South Carolina. The well-trained Ninth bested its opponent during the August field problems, which were simply dress-rehearsals for larger-scale maneuvers to come.

It was on the field of maneuver that the men of the *Octofoil* discovered that their commanding general had been a rather good quarter-miler at West

PREPARING FOR THE "GAS CHAMBER"

Point, thirty years previous. After using a steady dog-trot to escape capture by the 30th Division, General Hoyle conceived of the idea of keeping troops in condition through the use of *double-time*. Thus began a long-standing procedure.

Back for a temporary respite from the field, the men of the Ninth settled down to enjoy a few pleasures. Off-duty hours generally were spent in drinking beer, going to a movie, dancing at the Service Club—or listening to smooth tunes, like those which poured forth from Sergeant (Warrant Officer) Bob Warren's *hot trumpet*.

Featured articles often were written about the Ninth. There was First Sergeant Cooley of the Ninth Medical Battalion's Company *A*. At the age of 19 years he was the youngest first sergeant in the U.S. Army. And there was the Ninth Division Service Club, under the able overall direction of Mrs. Dorothy N. McFarland, senior hostess. It had the largest cafeteria volume of any club in the Army. The establishment was praised by the Army's Inspector General, as well as being described in an edition of *The Saturday Evening Post.*

Prize article about Fort Bragg and vicinity, however, was a nationally featured column by Jean Lightfoot, *NEA* correspondent. Wrote she on Fayetteville:

There isn't much for a soldier to do in town.

Stand around the old yellow brick slave market that bottlenecks traffic on the square. Eat chow mein at New China restaurant, fried chicken at Rainbo restaurant, steak at Prince Charles Hotel *restaurant, or a hamburger at Smith's lunch. If you have any money.*

Dance, drink beer and feed the nickleodeons at Elbo Inn, Lighthouse Barbecue, Pat's Tavern (private dining rooms: $1), Shell Chateau (private dining rooms : $1). If you have a doll and a couple of dollars . . .

* * * *

SEPTEMBER brought news of more maneuvers, the officially announced: *Largest peacetime maneuvers in the history of the United States.* And radio waves brought news of an explanatory nature when Secretary of War Stimson came to the microphone to explain War Department action under the Draft-Extension Bill. Soldiers were to be kept in the service for an additional twelve to eighteen months. Some, over the age of 28, would be released at once.

Between September 13th and 16th the Ninth sent advance detachments to its future bivouac area near Chester, South Carolina. These small housing parties followed a general route, one which later was used by convoys carrying the main body of the Division. They proceeded across the reservation to Southern Pines, then via Rockingham, Monroe, Osceola, Fort Mill and Rock Hill into their destination. The Ninth was to bivouac east of Chester initially, on the banks of the Catawba River. After the *fighting* began, the Division units were to move into a pup-tent city near Kershaw, S. C., thence to Cheraw on November 15th, until the end of the war games.

The 39th Combat Team (including the 26th Field Artillery Battalion) was the first complete combat unit of the Ninth Division to set up at Rock Hill. It moved in on September 26th and was followed by other outfits of the Division. Physical and mental stamina were to be well tested during the ten weeks that followed. Wrapped in blankets and huddling around fires at night, the men found cold weather as much a problem as any maneuver.

These games consisted of a series of practical exercises between corps and armies, as well as inter-corps combat exercises. Making up the I Army Corps were the Ninth and 30th Infantry Divisions, and the 13th Field Artillery Brigade. Tactical problems consumed a major portion of the week and generally were completed in time to allow a free weekend.

The natives of the *battle* area were very friendly. Some of the best treatment ever accorded men in uniform was shown by these Carolineans. Many GIs were invited to supper, for weekends and for the evening. This kindness was greatly appreciated. Problem-weary men particularly were overjoyed at the prospect and the realization of supper in a huge southern mansion—complete with servants.

During early October the Ninth Division had a Quartermaster railhead at Catawba and the Division base camp was near Lando. But the infantrymen of the Ninth gave little thought to Division headquarters. Sparked by the 60th Infantry, they were pursuing and polishing off superior numbers of 8th Division troops.

A small security patrol from the 9th Division's 60th Infantry crept quietly through the dark woods of South Carolina shortly after midnight. No Carolina moon betrayed them, no sound broke the air. Hour after hour they had been crawling through the dense underbrush scarcely breathing lest their presence be betrayed.

Suddenly, off to the right there was a rustling of leaves. Each man felt as though a sharp knife had been plunged in his heart. Waiting a moment, the lieutenant turned and whispered orders quietly.

The soldiers spread left and right in an ambushing formation, rifles ready for action. Then, sharply the signal was given, and the squad closed in—to capture a stray mule from a nearby farmhouse.

—Charlotte Observer

Despite the *snafus* of this play war—and the many faults and shortages uncovered—some units did themselves proud. Chemical-warfare men routed tankers and saved the Division command post from capture by spreading *poison* (tear) gas upon the armored men, who had neglected to carry their gas masks. The 1st Battalion of the 39th Infantry cap-

During the time of maneuvers, the semi-permanent buildings of the Ninth Division were occupied by a 6,000-bed hospital. This was a precautionary measure, since an estimated 3% of the 525,000 men on maneuvers were expected to be ill. An epidemic might have caught 6,000 or more men.

tured an *enemy* blimp when crafty doughboys held the ground crew captive . . . until the flyers gave up! And the 47th Infantry was referred to as *The Raiders* so frequently, that Colonel Gibson made the nickname official.

Wet weather brought back memories of tented life during November 1940. It also signaled the loss of old-timer Colonel Frank C. Mahin, who left the 60th Infantry for Camp Barkley, Texas. The well-liked leader soon rose to the rank of major general. But his brilliant career was cut short by a fatal airplane accident.

On Armistice Day of 1941, General Hoyle joyfully announced that the Ninth had received a man from Nevada—Private Francis Bozarth of Las Vegas. With this addition, the Ninth was now an *All-American* Division, having members from every state of the Union.

* * * *

An hour before daybreak on November 17th, the Ninth Division broke camp and moved on the Pee Dee River. It was here that *frontline* action would take place. Two days later a great mass-attack of parachute troops dropped upon the Ninth and was repulsed. But the paratroopers proved that airborne attacks could be successful.

Thanksgiving Day was uneventful and cold. By the 28th maneuvers were declared officially at an end, and *Octofoil*-wearing GIs of the Ninth looked forward to a second observance of Thanksgiving—inside their own mess-halls. Almost everyone was happy as the Division rolled back into Fort Bragg . . . especially the inductees who soon were to be discharged for age.

Men jammed the shower rooms, almost drinking in the good hot water. Fresh, clean clothing felt good upon their tired bodies. Some had heard that two new USO Clubs would open formally in Fayetteville around December 10th. And there was the confirmed rumor that the Ninth would become motorized.

December of 1941 began like any other month. Christmas furloughs were announced; the 39th Infantry dedicated its new Regimental Chapel; and Christmas packages began arriving at *APO 9*. General Hoyle disclosed that materiel was arriving daily for the motorization of the Division. Physical examinations were given 28-year-old soldiers, preparatory to their discharge. Mayor McFadyen of Fayetteville proclaimed that December 10th would be *Welcome Neighbor Day*.

On Saturday night, December 6, 1941, soldiers went to the movies, drank their beer, danced, and casually read newspaper items about apologetic Japanese envoys in Washington, D. C. The *over 28* men were dreaming of their release from the service on the following Monday. There were thoughts of furloughs at home and a quiet Christmas with the family.

If the morale of the Division had dropped slightly upon announcement that the draft law was extended, it was to rise sharply on Sunday. GIs were lounging around radios and enjoying normal off-duty

FROM THE BEGINNING . . . A "SHOW DIVISION"

bunk-fatigue. Then all of a sudden the program stopped, and an announcer bellowed forth the most stupendous news many ever would hear:

> *Ladies and Gentlemen, I have an important announcement to make. The Japanese have just bombed Pearl Harbor!*

At first this explosive news was received with misbelief. But later newscasts confirmed the original announcement. By the time most of the listeners had regained their equilibrium, action was being taken by the Ninth Division. Among the most surprised individuals were those scheduled to be released the next day. Their orders were rescinded immediately.

It didn't take long for the Ninth to change over to wartime duties. By midnight of December 7th the infantry regiments were alerted and on the move. Led by the 39th, the Division guarded vital waterworks, bridges and war manufacturing plants. From now on all future movements of the Ninth were to be carried out with the utmost secrecy.

Welcome Neighbor Day went off on schedule in Fayetteville and huge crowds attended. To satisfy cool weather appetites, there was a gigantic barbecue. Thousands of girls drove in from outlying districts for the mammoth street dance. Besides a colorful parade, there was a chance to visit the new USO Clubs, which were holding open house. But the joy of the celebration was diminished slightly by the state of war. Soldiers did not have the same outlook as they did one week previous.

By the 11th the United States was at war with Japan, Germany and Italy. Blackout restrictions were in force around Fort Bragg. This was a strange experience for a nation brought up on bright lights, and many a minor accident occurred.

While some men were fortunate enough to obtain Christmas furloughs, most Ninthmen stayed in camp. On December 25th the Division ate its last Christmas dinner in the States for several years to come.

* * * *

A NOT too bright New Year of 1942 dawned upon the world. Over in the Philippine Islands, General Douglas MacArthur was leading a losing battle against overwhelming odds. The ever-lengthening tentacles of Japanese aggression spread over Asia and toward Australia. British forces in the Middle East were doing well to hold their own. It definitely was possible that Germany would invade the South American continent via Vichy-controlled Dakar.

As the month of January became rooted more firmly, the Army ordered every one of its military personnel inoculated against Yellow Fever. Taking of *shots* shared the spotlight with a Division military tournament. Military skills were the basis of most contests, but the climax of the events was a greased pig chase. Contestants almost smothered the poor little porker who—like Calvin Coolidge—refused to run, and the final winner was determined by the toss of a coin.

Contests, regimental shows, non-com schools, intra-Divisional basketball and dry-run rail embarkations featured the remainder of January and early February. Snowfall failed to halt the training at Fort Bragg. Even the arrival of half-tracks and other vehicles did not stop until the Ninth Division was well motorized. As part of a novel experiment, the Division was pioneering the present-day armored infantry. The main idea seemed to be: *ride, jump out, fight.*

People also were in the contemporary spotlight. Sergeant Stanley Schmidt and Private Peter Metalios of the 39th Infantry Regiment were cited for quick action which saved an ammunition magazine from exploding. The Ninth's commanding general received his second star. Men of the 60th heard that their former executive officer, Colonel Charles L. Steel, was now leading the 31st *(America's Foreign Legion)* Regiment against the Japanese on Bataan. Lt. Colonel (Brig. Gen.) Edwin H. Randle had just returned from the Fort Leavenworth Command and Staff School, to take command of the 47th Infantry. And sculptor Private First Class Phillip C. Orlando was in the limelight with his excellent workmanship.

The bubble of motorization burst on March 1st when the Ninth became an amphibious division, attached to the 1st Amphibious Corps, Atlantic Fleet. Thus began a vigorous training program, destined to end only with a full-dress performance on the beaches of North Africa.

Since the enemy held most of the future battlefields of World War II, it was necessary that the

McFADYEN'S POND

United States Army learn how to land upon unfriendly shores against a well-fortified foe. Mock-ups and a landing-net platform were built, the latter being situated on McFadyen's Pond. Training began in the vicinities of Norfolk, Virginia; Solomon's Island, Maryland; and New River, North Carolina . . . where wet and bewildered GIs found that this new type of warfare was an exact skill, requiring much practice. Falling into the water was easy, indeed.

During mid-March, two Ninth Division Colonels were appointed Brigadier Generals; they were Manton S. Eddy (then Assistant Division commander), and Stafford LeRoy Irwin (commanding Division Artillery). General Eddy had arrived one week earlier from Fort Lewis, Washington, whereas General Irwin had been commanding Divarty for many months. These two soldiers were to pilot the Ninth Division to fame in North Africa, the former becoming the Division's first combat commander and the latter leading a heralded 2000-man motor march to stop Rommel at Thala.

Change after change overtook the rosters of the Ninth, making the addition of new blood quite necessary. America's expanding Army needed experienced officers and men. It dipped deeply into the well-trained manpower of the Ninth Division, taking cadres to form such famous divisions as the 82nd and 88th—taking such leaders as Colonel (Major General) William R. Schmidt, the 39th's first commanding officer, who received his first star and a higher command. In addition the Ninth trained cadremen for the 78th Division and other units.

Approaching spring signaled the beginning of Easter furloughs. It was about this time that the Ninth Division demonstrated amphibious maneuvers for five major movie studios. And the 70th Tank Battalion, commanded by Major John P. Welborn, joined the Division. They drove the little *lightning buggies* which were to furnish the combat teams of the Ninth with armor during their invasion of North Africa.

A memorable time for the Division came at the end of March. Marine Colonel A. J. Drexel Biddle, considered the world's outstanding authority on the art of bayonet fighting, instructed infantrymen in close-in fighting. What made these demonstrations more interesting was the fact that Colonel Biddle was then 67 years of age, and still spry.

Army Day of 1942 was the last such occasion for the Ninth Division as a combat unit within the confines of the United States. Appropriately, the Army Day program was one of amphibious exhibitions in the form of a competitive military tournament. There were eighteen events, the biggest of which was *swimming with full equipment*. The 60th Combat Team emerged as victors of the tournament.

* * * *

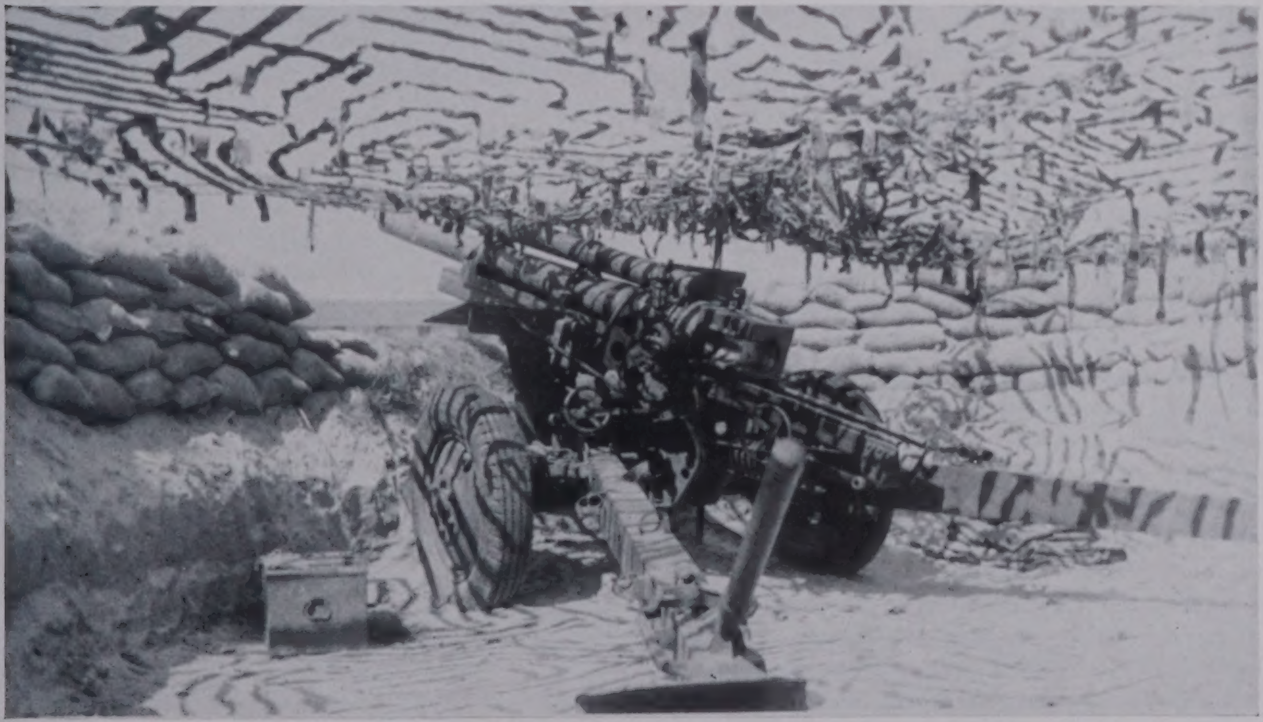
ON MAY 5th the gallant defenders of besieged Corregidor were overwhelmed. Lacking food, ammunition or hope of reinforcement, they surrendered. This news reached a saddened American public. Common opinion had been, "Oh, the Japs? We can lick them in a couple of weeks!" Now the American nation realized, as it did its military and naval leaders, that World War II was to be a long affair. (It hit the Ninth, too, for thirty-five former Division officers had been captured at Bataan and Corregidor.)

Japan's sneak punch at Pearl Harbor had left the United States Army with but one alternative—maximum expansion in minimum time. As summer of 1942 approached, the fast-growing strength of this force was becoming very evident. It was not yet strong enough to launch large scale counter-offensives. However, it would be soon—very soon.

Part of this growing military might was exemplified by the Ninth Division. On May 22, 1942, Secretary of War Stimson visited the Division and viewed landing demonstrations made by the 47th Infantry at much-used McFadyen's Pond. The Secretary of War was well pleased. He wrote General Hoyle regarding the visit soon after:

". . . it was a source of gratification to me to see the excellent condition of your men and their training, and to see how much progress they have made since my last inspection of Fort Bragg over a year ago.

THE 105's WERE READY



"I was particularly impressed by the aggressive attitude and technical training of the 47th Infantry Combat Team which made the landing demonstration."

At Fort Bragg, the Ninth Infantry Division continued its amphibious training and wondered what combat assignment was in store. Landings could be made against several enemy-held beaches—German *or* Japanese. A glance at the *big picture,* however, might have given inquisitive soldiers their answer. Two keys to world-wide operations were the Mediterranean Sea and the dark continent of Africa. The former linked the Atlantic and Pacific wars via the strategic Suez Canal and the Middle East. The latter was of grave concern to the United States, for Axis success in North Africa could well mean invasion of Brazil.

Russia at this time was in dire need of relief from mounting German pressure. Temporarily the Soviet Union had taken the initiative, freeing Moscow and the central front of immediate danger. But to the south a skillful Prussian-bred militarist, Field Marshal Karl von Rundstedt was to hinder the Red Army for many months to come. Before the great Russian victory at Stalingrad could become possible, it was necessary that some sort of *second front* divert German manpower and supplies.

Prime Minister Winston Churchill of Great Britain, and America's President Franklin D. Roosevelt held a conference in Washington, D. C., during January of 1942. Military and naval experts were present to assist these great leaders, and a bold plan of action was tentatively agreed upon. The European Theater, because of its shorter lines of supply and possibilities for quicker victory, was given priority over the Pacific Theater.

Another meeting of the Allied leaders and their Combined Chiefs of Staff was held during the following June. At this time the efficient and well-supplied *Afrika Korps* of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel was threatening Cairo, Alexandria and the Suez. By July British forces had fallen back upon positions near El Alamein. It was a dark hour for the sorely-tried Eighth Army. Plans were already in preparation by the Nazis for a military government in Egypt. Records and other important papers were set afire by the British in Cairo.

Alexandria, Cairo and El Alamein were more than just ordinary prizes of war. If these regions fell Rommel's *Korps* might sweep through the Middle East. The oil of Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia would go to feed Hitler's war machine . . . and India, fabulous crossroads of the world, would fall easy prey to the enemy. Germany and Japan then could link up at Calcutta or Bombay. Russia would be encircled; the treasures of the East lost to the Allies, and Australia open to full-scale invasion. China, thus cut off from all aid, would be forced to surrender.

The situation was far more serious than anyone then realized. For even if the Allies *were* able to stage a comeback, any initial delay could have proved disastrous. Additional time might have enabled Germany to perfect its atomic bomb first. With robot and rocket warfare, the atomic bomb, most of the world's raw materials, three-fourths of the world's population, and mastery of three inter-linking continents, Germany, Japan and Italy would stand invincible.

Ponderous shipments of tanks and artillery ammunition were rushed to Egypt by the United States. While a small, tired army and air force, composed of ANZACS, Scotsmen, Englishmen, empire troops and ATS girls (British Wacs), kept closed the gateway to Suez, Allied leaders agreed upon their strategy: A refitted and much stronger Eighth Army would launch a powerful counter-offensive from El Alamein. The United States would sweep down upon French-held possessions in Morocco and Algeria in a simultaneous assault. America's amphibious invasion forces would be mounted in the British Isles and the United States. Every effort would be made to win the French and native populations over to the Allied cause.

It was absolutely essential that the North African venture be a success. Much depended upon this first great offensive. Failure meant prolongation of the conflict—and perhaps loss of the war. But the Allies were willing to take this chance. D-Day was to be during late fall . . . on a date the Ninth Infantry Division would never forget.

* * * *

GENERAL HOYLE

THE Army's new pay raise was a big topic of conversation during June. At least it was to American soldiers. Under the new plan pay increases were given all enlisted ranks, with the last four grades obtaining something new—family allotments. Privates received the largest increase; their base salary now started at fifty dollars per month. Moreover, enactment of the Pay-Raise Bill enabled the War Department to draft thousands of men previously deferred for reason of dependency.

With the proposed invasion of North Africa only a few months off many Britons visited the Ninth Division. Among these was Vice Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, head of the almost legendary British *Commandos*. The 47th Infantry conducted a demonstration in honor of the visitors. Live ammunition was used by the *Raiders* with overhead fire supplied by the 84th Field Artillery Battalion. Few GIs then dreamed that they would be fighting shortly alongside other men in these same British uniforms.

During the summer one regiment was kept on amphibious maneuvers. The 39th Infantry returned from Solomon's Island, Maryland, on June 16th after fifteen days of landing exercises. Four days later the 47th Infantry left for its turn on maneuvers. These were the days of maddening *chigger* bites and the first mail censorship. Despite the hard work attached to such maneuvers, many soldiers preferred this type of training . . . especially during the heat of summer.

As the date of first combat steadily approached, more changes developed in the leadership of the Ninth Division. Major General R. E. D. Hoyle was ordered to Camp Roberts, California, on July 8th. General Irwin assumed command until the 24th. On that day Brigadier General (Lt. General) Manton S. Eddy was placed in command of the Ninth by the War Department. Within a short time (August 9th) he received his second star.

The new Division commander was a tall, fatherly-looking veteran of World War I, who had been wounded while serving with the original 39th Infantry in 1918. General Eddy was not a West Pointer, but he *was* a natural-born soldier. Ungiven to flashy showmanship, this new commanding general efficiently and inspiringly led the Ninth through Africa, Sicily, England and Normandy. When Major General Manton S. Eddy left for a higher command (to quote Thomas R. Henry in *The Saturday Evening Post)* he was written and spoken of as, ". . . the country's most brilliant division commander." The Ninth Infantry Division was considered by correspondents and military leaders as being one of the best combat units in the European Theater. Guiding the Division into this position was the mild-mannered leader, who though fearless himself, believed that victories should be won by sweat and surprise, rather than by blood and death. That the Division was better because of such leadership cannot be denied.

Rounding out its second year, the Ninth Division was a very much different kind of fighting force than the skeleton organization of 1940. For one thing the Division was now one of the most publicized in the

United States. And it bristled with modern equipment, too. While personnel had changed, thousands of eager recruits melted into the team of men who wore the tri-colored *Octofoil* upon their sleeve. Morale was high and three newspapers were supported by the GIs, in addition to the Fort Bragg *POST*. These were the mimeographed regimental papers *The Falcon, The Raider* and *The Go-Devil.*

During this time able Brigadier General (Major General) Donald A. Stroh joined the Ninth as Assistant Division Commander, and the trio of commanders who were to lead the regiments into first combat was completed. Colonel (Brigadier General) Benjamin J. Caffey commanded the 39th Infantry, Colonel Edwin H. Randle, the 47th Infantry and Colonel Frederick J. De Rohan, the 60th Infantry.

Organization Day caught the Division in the midst of final training. Messages of congratulations poured in; speeches extolled the progress made during two years of reactivation. But real old-timers were hard to find amongst the husky men in khaki. These were mostly of the war crop, good soldiers whose main occupation was that of being a civilian.

General Eddy spoke over radio Station WPTF at Raleigh on August 1st. He stressed the great turnover in personnel. The list of those who left was long indeed; enlisted men and officers had gone to every theater of operations. Many had formed new divisions. Some were already famous in combat—some had passed on.

As the excitement of the anniversary wore off, a new addition was made to the infantry regiments . . . *Cannon Company*. Another change was the elimination of the automatic rifle squad assigned to each rifle platoon. In its place, one automatic rifle team was assigned to each rifle squad. This substitution greatly helped small unit actions, since the squads could count upon increased firepower.

* * * *

DRESS-REHEARSALS were coming to an end. The great show soon would begin. Troops received their cue during early September, when General Eddy called the Division together and issued a warning order. The 39th Infantry Regiment was selected for a *Special Mission* and would leave prior to the main group. Addressing all combat teams before

BRITISH LEADERS VISIT NINTH

their departure dates, the Division commander informed the Ninth that, "The regiments of this division will soon have the opportunity to make history." He also stated that the Division would reassemble *somewhere* at the end of 1942.

After over two years of training as a Divisional team, the Ninth would now be broken up into regimental combat teams. These were to be attached to other commands—and sometimes would operate independently. This condition was to exist for many months to come. Nevertheless, the regiments of the Ninth Division still were to go into their first battle simultaneously, although over a far-flung front. Global warfare indeed was to be exemplified in the great area covered by the combat teams of the Ninth Infantry Division.

The usually upset stomach of Adolf Hitler might have taken a turn for the worse, if he had but known why the Ninth Division was getting ready to leave its comfortable Fort Bragg home. Leading the pack was the 39th Combat Team, those soldiers who proudly bore the title *The Fighting Falcons.* This was the regiment which had been the first invader to sit upon the banks of Germany's Rhine during World War I.

After the *Falcons* were alerted for shipment a movement outdoors began. Troops vacated their spotless barracks and settled in a nearby tented bivouac. Most GIs wondered as have soldiers for thousands of years, "Where do we go from here?" The answer to this question was to be obscured by censorship for the next two and one-half years. First destination of the travelers proved to be Fort Dix, New Jersey. Here, after routine checkups and inoculations, the 39th would sail overseas.

It was raining on September 17, 1942 . . . the day on which the *Falcons* bade *goodbye* to Fort Bragg and the remaining units of the Ninth. Memories of the past caused some men to have a lump in their throats. But for the most part, the rail movements (which began at 6 A.M.) occupied most of everyone's time and filled immediate thoughts. The last group of soldiers arrived at Fort Dix by 1 P.M. on the 18th. After leaving the train passengers had to walk about three miles to the staging area, and beds felt good to the somewhat tired men of the 39th Combat Team that night.

At Dix last minute affairs were straightened out, necessary issues of new clothing were obtained and records were checked—with some unpleased individuals feeling the inoculating needles of the medics as a result. By now all troops had the new *M-1* steel helmet, and mail censorship was in efficient operation, too. A few geniuses tried to beat this system through the use of prearranged codes and other devices, but Army censorship was a hard customer to buck!

With the hour of embarkation approaching, *Falcons* were instructed as to do's and don'ts of convoy travel. Chaplains held special services and last minute letters were written. New Yorkers longed to take a last visit home, and Westerners mused at the strange Army practice which sent men from California to Europe—and soldiers from the East to the West Coast.

The stay at Fort Dix was a short one. On September 24th the regiment began moving to Staten Island—where so many of Uncle Sam's fighting men were to embark for combat. This was part of the New York Port of Embarkation, that POE where masses of men and equipment shuttled past America's skyscrapers and the Statue of Liberty to carry war to Hitler's *Fortress Europa.*

By September 25th everyone was aboard the five vessels which would carry the 39th Combat Team overseas. These ships were the U.S. Naval Transports, *USS Leedstown, USS Chase, USS Thomas Stone, USS Almaack* and the *SS Exceller,* a commercial steamer *drafted* for the journey by the Navy.

Early on the dawn of September 26, 1942, the convoy of troopships and their escort silently slipped out of New York Harbor and headed for the open sea. Except for a few rumors, the destination beyond Halifax, Nova Scotia, was a mystery.

The mighty *USS Arkansas* guided the troop carriers into Halifax during the afternoon of September 28th. Here the destroyers refueled. By the following 3 A.M. the convoy was heading for the port of Belfast, Northern Ireland . . . accompanied by a flotilla of British and Canadian ships.

* * * *

LAND HO!" It was October 5, 1942, off the Irish coast and the 3,970-mile journey was about to end. The convoy dropped anchor in Belfast Harbor

during the next afternoon, while doughs lined the rails and awaited their chance to land. Docking began on the morning of the 7th—and debarkation soon was underway.

The first Ninth Division unit to touch foreign soil was the 2nd Battalion, which debarked at 10 A.M. After riding to the railhead on *lorries*, the 2nd piled aboard a new type of transportation—the British railroad *carriage* . . . pulled by a small, powerful engine with a comical whistle. A couple of toots of that whistle and the Americans were headed for Down Patrick Base Camp.

As the wheels clicked along, the *Falcons* gazed at their new surroundings. For the next few days they would hear a different tongue, and view what folks back home called *The Old Country*.

Men from the 3rd Battalion began unloading at 2 P.M., and were enroute to Camp Laughermoor at Temple Patrick within an hour. After detraining the 3rd marched eight miles through a typical Irish fog, over the wet, hilly, green countryside to their camp.

Sunnyland Camp at Carrickfergus played host to the 1st Battalion. This was the self-same Carrickfergus, off whose shores John Paul Jones won a naval victory (with the *Ranger*) in 1778. But historical lore was not the reason that the *Falcons* visited Carrickfergus. Like the other 39th battalions, the 1st made several hardening marches and was back on board ship by October 15th.

Aboard the *USS Almaack,* the Regimental Service Company left the remainder of the 39th Combat Team at Belfast, sailing on to Scotland. The *Almaack* skimmed up the Clyde, passing Greenock, Gourock and famed Ben Lomond. She docked at Glasgow the following day. Sea-weary GIs debarked immediately and made a five-mile march through Glasgow to Bella-Houston Park, which was on the outskirts of this port and industrial city. Here they stayed until October 14, 1942.

October 17th found the entire combat team assembled at Inverary, Scotland. Amphibious operation training and forced marching was in order. Men of the 39th participated against units of the famous Scots *Black Watch* during this maneuver period, and training was conducted "in a downpour of rain and over wet, tough terrain."

But the stay in Scotland quickly was ended. The Americans had had their small amount of sightseeing and visiting with America's allies on home ground. As a mass of ships formed outside the river Clyde, minds again pondered the old question . . . "WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?" That question also was pressing on the inquisitive nature of the other regiments of the Ninth!

* * * *

YES, back in the United States preparations were under way to implement the mounting of the African invasion on schedule. Actually, the date of the landings had been moved back from September to November 8, 1942, as a result of lack of shipping.

The amphibious command gathering in America was designated as the Western Task Force. Leading this portion of the *Operation Torch,* as the landings were termed in code, was the world's greatest proponent of armored warfare—Major General (General) George S. Patton, Jr. Naval commander was Rear Admiral (Admiral) Henry K. Hewitt.

On September 21st, when nobody yet knew his destination, most of the final training seemed as just some more experience. Great secrecy had enveloped the landing plans and code names gave no hint as to the intended area of attack. As a consequence, a lackadaisical atmosphere infected the amphibious exercises. Realistic General Patton dispatched a letter to all concerned . . . there was too much "maneuver complex" . . . this was a prelude to the real thing.

General Patton's command was divided into three subtask forces. There was the *Northern* force, under Brigadier General (Lt. General) Lucien K. Truscott, Jr., who had been brought back from duty in the British Isles for this undertaking. His experience with the Dieppe Raid was influential in this assignment. The 60th Combat Team was to land with his group. The *Southern* force was commanded by Major General Ernest Harmon, an experienced tanker and tactician. A major part of General Harmon's force was the 47th Combat Team. Major General Jonathan W. Anderson had command of the *Center* force. The reserve for the invasion was placed in the 1st Provisional Corps under General Eddy. This group was composed of over 40,000 troops, and included those units of the Ninth Division not making the landings.

At that time there was a great deal of anti-British feeling amongst the French in Africa. This was due partly to British attempts to smash the French fleet at Dakar and Oran. It was a sentiment which was fanned by pro-German propaganda, disseminated by the Vichy Government. Thus every effort was made to build up the invasion as an American endeavor. The United States flag was worn as an armband under the shoulder sleeve insignia of each invading soldier. American flags were to be carried by each battalion. (They were later actually flown from the stern of each landing craft . . . "like a yacht race.")

Not knowing the reasons behind such actions, many soldiers wondered as to the wisdom of such instructions: ". . . Officers and men entering battle will be careful to see that their shoulder patches and insignia are in place and visible." Troops going on board ship, however, temporarily covered all such patches and placed metal insignia inside their pockets. This was to eliminate the possibility of enemy submarines or aircraft spotting the identity of units being transported.

* * * *

THE 47th and 60th Regiments were alerted and moved out of their warm barracks on September 26, 1942. A drizzling rain played down upon the *Raiders* and *Go-Devils,* as they headed for a temporary tented bivouac, which was off Chicken Road, several miles from the Ninth Division Area. Three days later the remainder of the Division (including the 34th Field Artillery Battalion) moved to the Motorized Area and occupied barracks formerly belonging to the 36th Engineers.

Fort Bragg days now were coming to a speedy end. The beer, dances, movies, USO troupes, PX supplies and girls would be rationed or non-existent where the Ninth was going. Non-essential items found their way home, and last letters hastily were written. Then orders arrived for the regiments to shove off for a POE . . . Fort Bragg days were done.

It was on October 14, 1942, that the 60th Combat Team moved to Norfolk, Virginia, and the 47th Combat Team followed on the 17th. Invasion exercises again were on the schedule. At Chesapeake Bay, in choppy seas and through cold winds, soldiers went up and down the nets and practiced landings. Solomon's Island was a very familiar spot to the men of the Ninth, but new arrivals (to bolster the combat teams) needed every bit of additional training. Actual landing craft also were used, with many seasick doughboys resulting.

This was one of the first instances of large-scale operations involving both the Army and Navy. As was quite natural, many confusing situations developed—both during training and in the course of the invasion which followed.

A final drill was made at night during foul weather . . . now the training period was over. By October 21st the Task Force was back at Norfolk Navy Yard. Special rigs and booms protruded from the decks of troopships; every available bit of space was jam-packed. One of the most gigantic invasions of all times was about to get under way.

An excellent description of this large armada is given in a combat team report of 1942:

> *Battleships, aircraft carriers, heavy and light cruisers, destroyers, mine layers, submarines and special craft made a forest of masts across the harbor . . .*

With all personnel and equipment safely stowed aboard, the various sub-task forces prepared to sail. They would meet again at an ocean rendezvous. On the 22nd the Western Task Force was ready to embark. Anchors were weighed and the heavily-laden vessels gathered up steam. As October 23, 1942, dawned upon the world, the troopships and their escorting naval craft headed for the open sea. They streamed through Hampton Roads, into the Atlantic . . . an almost never-ending grey chain of American might. They were on their way, beginning the 3,000-mile zig-zag across a submarine-infested Atlantic.

This then was the beginning. It was a recall to arms for the men of the 47th and 60th Combat Teams, and for the 39th in Scotland. Here *was* the *real thing.* And, seated upon uncomfortable wire bunks, leaning in on group gatherings, or gazing at the America they loved, which was slowly fading into the past, soldiers asked that same question . . . the one which fighting men have asked since time immemorial . . .

"WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?"

Section II Photography Credits: Pages 21, 32 by 60th Infantry; 22 by Ft. Leavenworth; 30 by USAF; 34, 43 by Ft. Bragg; 36, 40, 41 submitted by Simon A. Garber; 38, 44, 46 by 39th Infantry.

Section III

D-Day...North Africa

COLD, grey steel and burning shell fragments invited Nazidom's *Afrika Korps* to retreat during the evening of October 23, 1942. A powerful and reorganized British Eighth Army was launching the military miracle of El Alamein. With the eyes of the world focused upon General Montgomery's *Desert Rats,* American and British forces effected a pincer-type series of landings upon French Morocco and Algeria. That was on November 8, 1942. The tide of war had changed . . . with a vengeance.

Behind this gigantic operation lies a tale of intrigue, deception, heroism and momentous planning. It is the story of the greatest long distance overseas invasion in the history of the world. It is the winning of a tremendous military gamble. To history this combined operation symbolizes the beginning of the end for the Axis. But to contemporary mankind, here was fuel for freedom.

Like every other major battle of World War II, the North African landings were not a victory of any single branch of service; each arm depended upon its comrades in uniform and upon the productive capacity of the home front. Modern warfare is successful only so long as all links in its complex chain are strong. Seldom was that fact evidenced more than by the invasion known as *Operation Torch.*

There never was an undertaking such as *Torch* in the manuals or military textbooks of the world. The planning originated with the Combined Chiefs of Staff of America and Britain. Military strategists of those two powers developed the finer points, and finishing touches were dabbed on by politically-chosen French leaders—who handled the delicate capitulations of certain garrisons and airports. There was also the Russian need of a *second front,* which dictated the immediate necessity for *Torch.*

The final D-Day plans were ambitious; they also were full of undeterminable factors. First there was Spain, the question mark hovering over North Africa. Would dictator Franco aid Nazism with a declaration of war . . . or would he continue to give moral and material support only? This was a problem of enormous importance, since Spanish territory flanked the entrance to the Mediterranean and possible lanes of invasion.

Operation Torch took all this into consideration—and followed the path of intrigue and gamble as a counterbalance. General Eisenhower sent his deputy, Major General (General) Mark W. Clark on an extremely dangerous secret mission to French North Africa. Here the tall American officer, assisted by a small group of experts, held a rendezvous

The Allied Team

Approximately 107,000 men comprised the invasion forces under Lt. General (General) Dwight D. Eisenhower. They were the

- *Western Task Force* (Major General George S. Patton, Jr.)
  - 47th and 60th Regimental Combat Teams (Ninth Infantry Division)
  - 2nd Armored Division (one combat command and one armored battalion)
- *Central Task Force* (Major General Lloyd Fredendall)
  - 1st Infantry Division
  - Combat Command *B,* 1st Armored Division
  - 1st Ranger Battalion
  - Corps Troops
- *Eastern Task Force* (Major General C. W. Ryder, until after landings)
  - 39th Regimental Combat Team (Ninth Infantry Division)
  - 168th Regimental Combat Team (34th Infantry Division)
  - 1st and 6th Battalions, *Commandos* (American and British troops)
  - 11th and 36th Regimental Groups (British 78th Infantry Division)

with pro-Allied French military leaders. The plans and capitulations which were obtained by General Clark and his party saved countless American and British lives.

More casualties were avoided because of other brave men. Intelligence sources discovered that General Francisco Franco of Spain was not prone to enter the war, and agents succeeded in mapping and plotting every landing area. This valuable knowledge was obtained cautiously . . . if one lone Vichy Frenchman had been approached or forewarned, all would have been lost.

Thus the invasion convoys sailed right under the *watchful* eyes of German observers in Spain and Spanish Morocco. The enemy thought the whole thing an effort to run supplies and reinforcements to the hard-pressed island of Malta, since all sorts of false rumors had been spread throughout Africa by American intelligence agents. So complete had been the deception that Germans and their French collaborators were led to believe that any attempted invasion would come via Dakar . . . their concentration of military and naval might was distributed accordingly. The Allies were able to land with full information; habits of leading citizens, customs of communities, systems of water, electric power and communications were studied in advance by expertly trained men. Deception and spying had reached a new zenith in military operations!

* * * *

BACK in the United States supplies and equipment were pouring forth in unbelievable quantities. Everything relating to the *Torch* affair was run on a coded system. Both strategy and supply were *top secret*—and then only a *very* select group knew the full plan. Fifteen weeks after the first meeting of the planners the invasion was launched. At that time an 850-ship convoy was ready, with over 700,000 different items stowed aboard.

Supply was but a part of the pre-invasion planning. Engineers secretly built models of landing zones. Thousands of maps were wrapped cautiously by GIs—who did not leave their workrooms until the amphibious operation was completed. Little was overlooked, from rail engines and freight cars to the delivery of mail at sea by naval destroyers and the distribution of letters on beachheads after the landings.

Transports were staged at various ports and destinations kept *hush-hush*. But the most remarkable feature about this entire effort is that the four-million-ton invasion fleet and its massive pyramids of equipment were assembled secretly from scratch in four months' time!

* * * *

O*PERATION TORCH* was the western jaw in the pincers movement designed to crush Axis resistance in Africa. The eastern jaw was the British Eighth Army at El Alamein, where American tanks and guns had aided in building up an overwhelming superiority of materiel. With fresh Australian and New Zealand reinforcements, possessing an excellent deceptive plan devised by Wavell two years previously and with the will to win, the Eighth was like a well-constructed tool in the hands of master-mechanic General (Field Marshal) Sir Bernard Law Montgomery.

On the other hand, the invasion forces faced possible annihilation from enemy submarines, land-based aircraft and a forewarned enemy. General George C. Marshall, as American Chief of Staff, had this to say of the invasion situation in a report to the Secretary of War:

> *The singular relationship existing between the Vichy Government and Berlin, and with the French provinces in North Africa, together with the differences of religion and race and the deep-rooted hatreds of the heterogeneous populations of Algiers and Morocco, imposed a political problem of maximum complexity on General Eisenhower. At the moment his energies and direction had to be concentrated on the successful penetration of an 800-mile coastline and a vast hinterland by a force of but 107,000 men. To further complicate the situation he must be on guard against the possibility of an Axis stroke through Spain to sever our communications through the Straits of Gibraltar and interrupt by aerial bombardment the single railroad line from Casablanca through Fez to Oran.*

There were other pressing problems, too. The Western Task Force would have to enter battle immediately after completing a 3,500-mile sea voyage. All task force landings were scheduled to take place during the darkness of early morning—on strange soil. The assaults were to be coordinated so as to occur within the space of an hour at three widely separated areas . . . and only a few of the 107,000 invaders had been in previous combat. That the Allied landings were successfully accomplished with so little loss of life is astounding.

As was expected, all did not happen as planned. A French uprising designed to assist the Western Task Force was nipped in the bud by a Vichy general. Attempts to take Algiers by frontal assault failed completely. The convoy carrying the 60th Combat Team to Port Lyautey was one hour and a half late; thus the element of surprise was gone. Furthermore, many landing craft were lost, foundered and smashed on the rocks near Fedala by inexperienced coxswains in foul weather.

On the credit side of the ledger was the precision operation conducted by the 47th Combat Team at Safi. The 39th Combat Team was in possession of its Algerian objectives soon after landing, and the 60th Combat Team waged a tremendous battle to overwhelm the most stubborn opposition in French Morocco. Of the huge invasion fleet of 850 vessels only 16 were lost. More important, the American Army was started well on the road to victory.

* * * *

THE saga of the North African affair began its most colorful chapter when 850 giants of the sea set sail in October of 1942. It was then that the story of massive planning gave way to the tightly-woven tale of regimental combat teams. These *R.C.T.'s*, or *C.T.'s* (as they later were called) were the backbone of the invasion—the *chessmen* of the strategists. Through these teams of ground force soldiers the battles of World War II achieved their success or failure, their invasion or their repulsion. The story of the Ninth's widely separated combat teams forms, therefore, a most interesting account.

Slightly bewildered *Falcons* of the 39th C.T. bade farewell to the fog-covered scenery and friendly natives of the British Isles on October 26, 1942. Attached to the Eastern Assault Force they had become part of a large troopship convoy. Prior to sailing the five transports carrying the 39th had been beehives of activity. *Something* was happening of a momentous nature, but what it was remained a well guarded secret. Naval craft of all sizes and types dotted the Irish Sea, ready to give battle to any intruder at a moment's notice. Rumor-mongers and rigid censorship confused the situation—until the *I told you so boys* had the task force doing everything but flying. There certainly would have been a great deal more excitement, had the *Falcons* known that the Eastern Assault Force was but another name for *first landing wave of the Eastern Task Force!*

Final destination was unannounced as the vessels deployed toward the United States. By now the North Atlantic was having the roughest of weather. Seasickness was not uncommon, although the food served the 39th was fairly good—especially in comparison with that served on most troop transports. Then three days of tipsy sailing westward came to an abrupt ending, and the course was changed to due south.

As the grey transports and their escorting warships steamed southward, suspense increased regarding the possible terminus of the voyage. On Sunday, November 1st, the long awaited journey's end was announced, "Algiers . . . Sunday Morning . . . November 8th!"

Coupled with this exciting revelation was the release of invasion plans:

Three task forces were to launch a simultaneous invasion of French North Africa . . . the eastern prong was to consist of the 39th, the 168th C.T. and attached units . . . the *Falcons* were to land east of Algiers . . . the 168th west of the city . . . troops were not to fire unless fired upon . . . at the first sign of hostile action by the French, the coded signal *Play Ball* was to be given . . . this was to result in warning other units along the far-flung front that resistance had developed.

The scope of the objectives which were assigned to the Eastern Task Force included much more than the city of Algiers. After the initial landings, it was the plan of the Allied Supreme Command to *funnel* the embryo British First Army and American divisions through the area, eventually capturing all of Tunisia. Algiers was an important prize mainly because of its airfield facilities, which could form an advance base for the combined operations of the AAF and RAF.

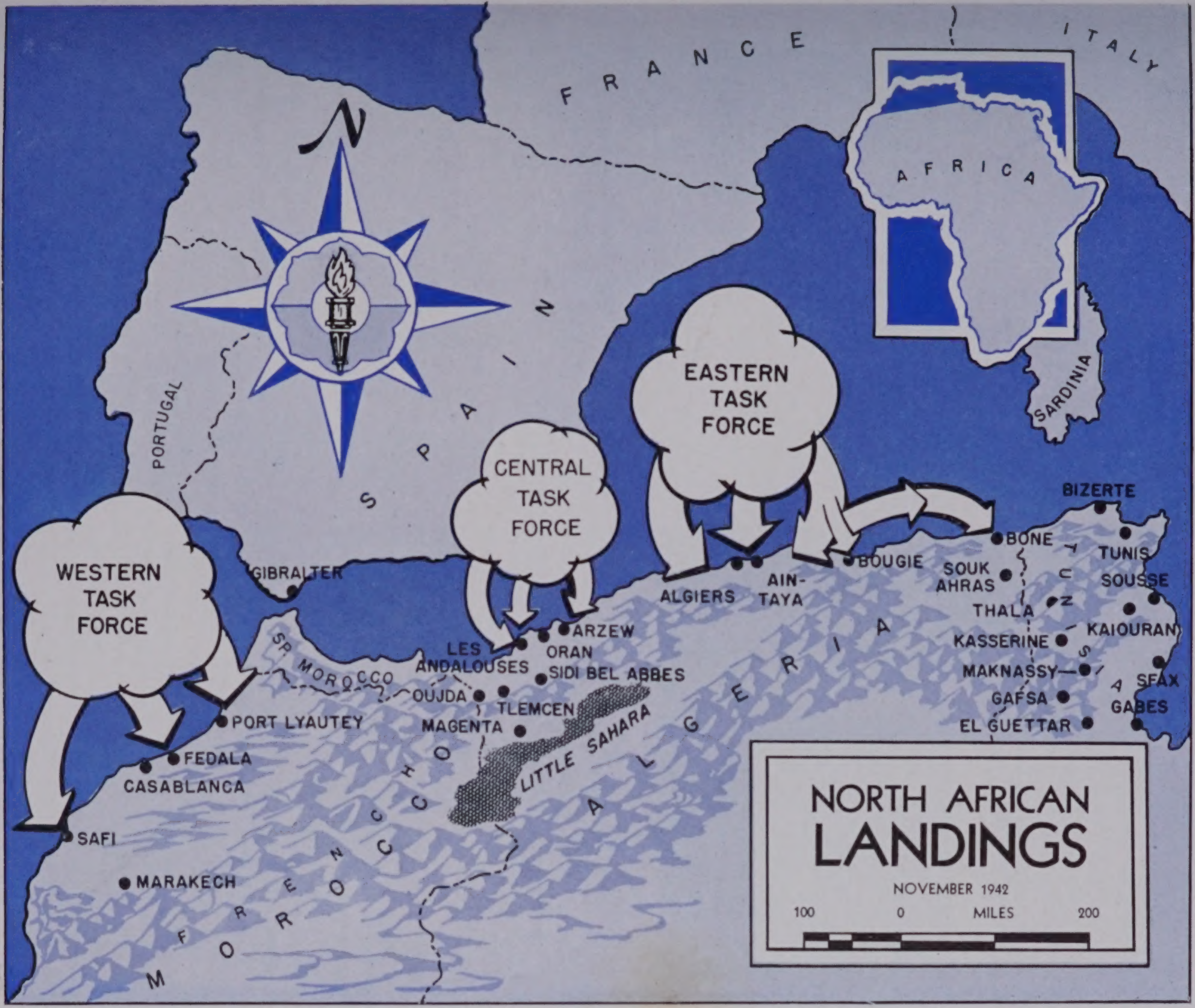
Route of the huge armada comprising the eastern force cut through the enemy-infested waters of the Mediterranean. After passing England's fortress gate of Gibraltar, the trip meant a 400-mile course through the well-known convoy lanes. German submarines and land-based aircraft were expected to be very active and U-boats already had exacted a great toll of British shipping since the beginning of the war—along these very lanes.

Time was short on board the transports. One week remained for all landing troops to become familiarized with the myriad of intelligence bulletins and special maps which suddenly had seized the contemporary spotlight. Soldiers were oriented as to their duties, the terrain and what they could expect to find awaiting them. *Commando* and special reconnaisance units were instructed as to the descriptions of individuals who might be encountered, their mannerisms and dispositions. Special maps were studied down to the last detail; pieces of information were sought eagerly.

Throughout the invasion force life evolved itself into a constant grind of instruction, study and speculative conversation. The transports sailed in a semicircular route on the Atlantic so as to kill time until the exact moment when the convoy was scheduled to enter and pass through the Straits of Gibraltar. On November 5, 1942, General Eisenhower and his staff arrived at Gibraltar. During the following day the skippers received their long-awaited signal and closed into a rendezvous. As the dark Atlantic shivered in its wake at 9 P.M., the fleet of ships slipped past the *Rock*, through the Mediterranean and on to Algeria.

German observers spotted the Allied convoys at Gibraltar. That was expected. The enemy rushed his information to higher headquarters. But the Allied strategy had been so clever and so secretive that the Nazis believed this to be an attempted running of supplies and manpower to the beleaguered isle of Malta. Already the Germans had fallen victim of another rumor: *the Allies were massing a large fleet off Dakar.* Sixty-three enemy submarines later were proved to have been off this west coast port, awaiting an attack which never came.

Now the Germans made an even greater error of judgment. To catch the convoy on its way to *Malta*, the enemy shifted every plane he could spare to his fields in Sicily, Sardinia and southern Italy. The



NORTH AFRICAN LANDINGS

NOVEMBER 1942

N
FRANCE
ITALY
AFRICA
SARDINIA
SPAIN
PORTUGAL
WESTERN TASK FORCE
CENTRAL TASK FORCE
EASTERN TASK FORCE
GIBRALTER
SP. MOROCCO
PORT LYAUTEY
FEDALA
CASABLANCA
SAFI
MARAKECH
MOROCCO
FRENCH MOROCCO
LES ANDALOUSES
ORAN
ARZEW
SIDI BEL ABBES
OUJDA
TLEMCEN
MAGENTA
LITTLE SAHARA
ALGERIA
ALGIERS
AIN-TAYA
BOUGIE
BONE
BIZERTE
TUNIS
SOUK AHRAS
SOUSSE
THALA
TUNISIA
KAIOURAN
KASSERINE
MAKNASSY
SFAX
GAFSA
GABES
EL GUETTAR
100
0
MILES
200

Luftwaffe plan was to trap and smash the fleet as it entered the narrow straits between Sicily and North Africa—known as *Bomb Alley*.

Deceptively the vessels headed for Malta during daylight of the 7th, passing their target areas near Algiers and Oran. That night they pivoted to the right rear, with full speed ahead for the invasion coast of Algeria. Goering's *Luftwaffe* had been fooled. It would not be able to cause any damage for some time. Planes and supplies would have to be moved to fields nearer the new theater of operations before the *Stukas* and *Messerschmidts* could hinder the invasion forces The convoys were safe—well, almost.

Almost? Yes, the war fast would be brought home to the men of the 2nd Battalion (Lt. Colonel Walter M. Oakes) of the 39th C.T.! It was during *General Quarters* on the morning of November 7, 1942, that near-tragedy struck at the *Falcons*. Men of the convoy column stared aghast at their first sight of war . . . explosions blazed forth from under the stern of the *USS Thomas Stone*. Water funneled into the air and the calm, blue Mediterranean reverberated to the shouts of, "We've been hit! . . . it's a torpedo . . . we've been hit!"

Indeed the *Stone* was hit—and badly. She was struck under the fantail in the after part of the hull. Her master cut the limping vessel out of the column, with smoke pouring forth from the torpedo wound.

The entire 2nd Battalion was aboard the *Stone*, and it was to have assaulted in the landing operation. Fortunately, Colonel Caffey had the 3rd Battalion acting as a floating reserve—for just such an emergency. Quick action was necessary. The *Stone* could not carry on without the aid of a tow . . . she was crippled. With but 24 hours remaining before H-Hour, the 3rd Battalion (Major Farrar O. Griggs) was substituted for the 2nd, and the convoy sailed on.

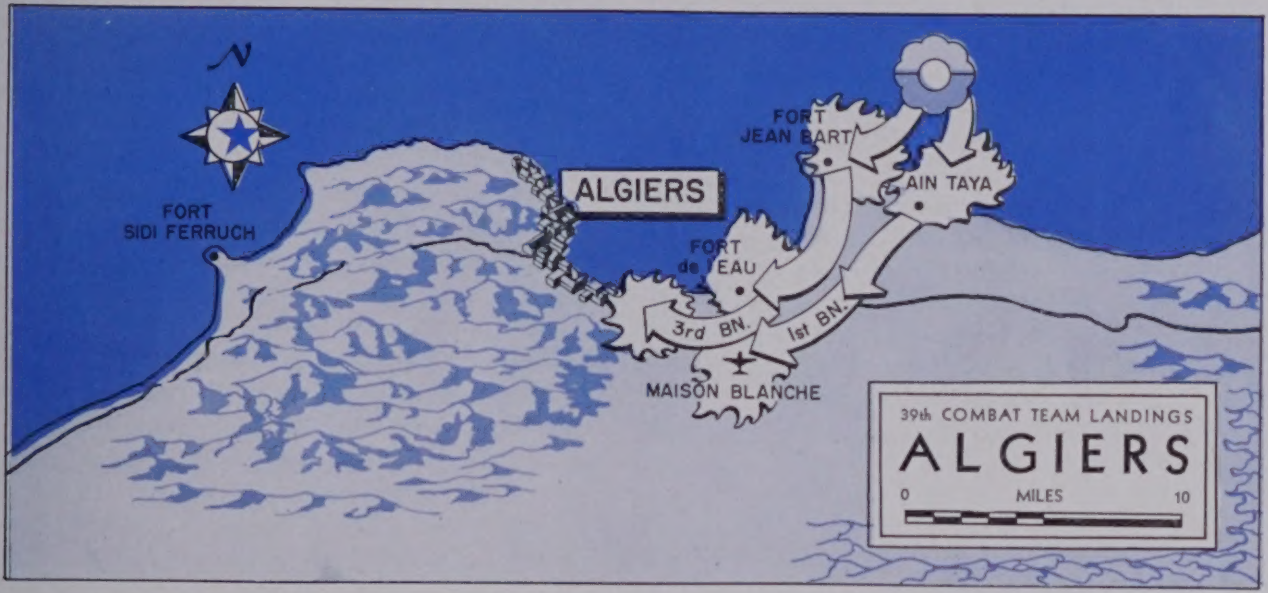
That left the *USS Thomas Stone* sitting in the dangerous Mediterranean . . . disabled, an easy mark for German or Italian patrol planes and submarines. Aboard was an entire battalion with "its precious equipment." It was 160 miles to the objective. The enemy now knew definitely of the convoy's presence, and the situation became more tense. With one full day of sailing left in these waters, the remainder of the skippers were on the alert.

Until this moment war had been a dreamy sort of nightmare; something to train for, to see in the newsreels or read about in the local journals. It was pretty terrible at second hand . . . now it was *horrible* at first hand. Those who knew of the torpedoing realized that this was no picnic . . . the enemy was playing for keeps! Many men of the 39th had buddies aboard the *Stone*. Now that transport was lying helpless in the middle of nowhere. Then came the usual question . . . "Who will be next?" An *unbelievable* event had transpired, as fantastic as the news of Pearl Harbor just eleven months prior. The bad news spread . . . *"They got the Stone . . . they got the Stone!"* War is like that.

But the convoy did not stop, neither did it have any further incidents. At 5 P.M. the 39th passed its landing beach but continued on. Then during the black of night the great grey fleet rushed to a rendezvous close to the landing areas. A final checkup and *America* was ready. So was the 39th Combat Team!

* * * *

STRAINED faces were hidden behind the mask of early morning darkness as the 39th C.T. headed for the sandy shore. The past and future filled almost everyone's mind. At 1:30 A.M. the 1st Battalion (Lt. Colonel A. H. Rosenfeld) disembarked and raced ashore into the uncertain blackness. They landed at Ain-Taya, about 15 miles east of the city of Algiers. Fifteen minutes later the 3rd Battalion raced ashore in the vicinity of Fort Jean Bart, which is near Ain-Taya. They had been delayed for two hours by failure of electricity aboard the *Leedstown,* which temporarily stopped the lowering of landing craft. Assisting the *Falcons* was one battalion of British *Commandos.*



While French coastal batteries and Allied warships exchanged salvos during the remaining hours of darkness, the 1st Battalion pushed inland. Within five hours and fifteen minutes after landing—hindered by darkness and in hostile territory—the unit negotiated 12 miles on foot to arrive at the key Maison Blanche (White House) Airport. A sharp, short battle ensued. Although the French were using tanks, the 1st Battalion overcame all resistance by 8:30 A.M.

Meanwhile, the 3rd Battalion moved inland to Fort de l'Eau. Here, too, opposition quickly was overcome. Following the rapid victory at Maison Blanche and vicinity came a well remembered sight. British *Hurricanes* and *Spitfires,* which had left Gibraltar at dawn, were dropping out of the sky and landing upon the newly captured airstrip. This signified that one of the major missions of the eastern invasion group had been accomplished—that of capturing the huge airdrome. (The 39th's objective had been seizure of the airfield, which was accomplished by 6:15 A.M.)

* * * *

COINCIDENT with the landing of the 39th, a bold attempt was under way—aimed at seizure of Algiers by frontal assault. Just before H-Hour, two British destroyers loaded with American and British fighting men inched their way up to the boom protecting the harbor of Algiers. Their mission was to capture the dock area and prevent any sabotage. Detector devices picked up the presence of these warships almost immediately, however, and searchlights played upon the water with rays of artificial light. Coastal batteries opened fire and one destroyer was hit badly. It turned about, but the other craft broke through the boom and nosed toward the central dock area. The small warship moved safely underneath the coastal guns as a new menace appeared—shell fire and machine-gun slugs. A landing was effected but resistance was too hot. At 9 A.M. the mauled vessel ran a gauntlet of fire from the coastal batteries and made the safety of the sea. Thus the attempt to take Algiers frontally failed.

In the area of Algiers, the 39th C.T. received another jolt from the sea. German raiders polished off the "Leedstown", which was lying off shore. From land, Lt. (Captain) Conrad V. Anderson could see the vessel ablaze and sinking. He swam out to the stricken transport, aided in evacuating personnel and saved the extremely valuable regimental kitchen equipment. The "Leedstown" had 500 aboard; however, only 12 men were lost (5 soldiers and 7 sailors).

But Algiers soon was surrounded. To the west the 168th C.T. had landed and received the surrender of Fort Sidi Ferruch, without a shot being fired. Against slight opposition the regiment made its way to the city limits. The 39th, meanwhile, had moved up to become part of the semi-circular development. By noon of the first day all objectives of the Eastern Assault Force either had been taken or were under fire.

Admiral Jean Darlan, Marshal Petain's self-chosen successor and commander in chief of all Vichy French Forces, happened to be visiting his sick son in Algiers at the time of the Allied landings. With Algiers encircled by land and sea—and with railroads, highways and airports in Allied hands, Darlan was ready to discuss the city's surrender with General Ryder. Both the Americans and the French awaited eagerly the result of these talks.

The logical happened: it was an armistice and would be followed by formal surrender. Occupation of Algiers would take place at 7 P.M. (Admiral Darlan was taken into "protective custody" and later proved useful in ordering other area leaders to issue the *cease fire* command). So less than twenty-four hours after the landings, the eastern prong of the invasion could report: *occupying key city and all objectives!*

* * * *

AS THEIR comrades were making history on the beaches of Algeria, the 2nd Battalion of the 39th was writing a colorful sidelight to the saga of invasion. Their actions prove a previous statement

ALGIERS

made in this text: *There never was such an undertaking as "Torch" in the manuals or military textbooks of the world.*

When the remainder of the convoy had steamed past, Colonel Oakes decided that he would try to join the fight. He loaded 700 men and provisions aboard the landing craft which were being carried by the *USS Thomas Stone* for the invasion. Led by a British corvette, the Colonel planned to sail these tiny LCVP's the remaining 160 miles to Ain-Taya . . . through enemy-infested waters and into battle. The match-wood fleet set sail as darkness began to cover the Mediterranean—destination beachhead!

Dune Vaillance Admirable

But these were flimsy craft not fitted to long-range sailing. They became unseaworthy during the course of the evening and proceeded to break apart. As a landing craft became unfit for travel, its men and equipment were hoisted aboard the corvette. So badly did these craft leak, however, it was decided finally to reload the entire battalion upon the diminutive corvette. Then the latter's guns sank the LCVP's which remained, so that the landings in Algeria would not become compromised.

The corvette was drawing a great deal of water when she docked on the morning of November 9th, loaded to the navigation bridge with the worn-out men of the 2nd Battalion. A few days later the wounded *Stone* was towed into port . . . in one piece. During the course of this remarkable gesture on the part of the 2nd Battalion, not one man or one piece of equipment had been lost. More important, the eager troops of the *Stone* had honorably discharged a duty to their comrades in arms—despite the initial terror of being disabled at sea.

* * * *

WHILE the Eastern and Central Task Forces invaded Algeria, an equally spectacular and more strongly resisted landing was being staged upon the beaches of French Morocco. Here intrigue and capitulation back-fired at the final moment; and here, the 47th and 60th C.T.'s of the Ninth Division tangled with the ever-legendary French Foreign Legion. Assaulting French Morocco was the Western Task Force. They were launching the ambitiously-conceived and boldly-executed plan which would free South America of any invasion threats.

It was October 24, 1942, and a rendezvous was in progress. The watery wastes of the Atlantic Ocean never before had witnessed such a vast assemblage. Transports stretched for miles and miles, protected by massive dreadnaughts and sleek destroyers—which darted about like farm dogs herding a flock of fat geese. Admiral Hewitt and his staff were taking temporary charge of the Western Task Force, the military thunderbolt which would unleash itself shortly upon French Morocco. From various inlets, ports and harbors came the convoys of men and equipment, food and ammunition, tanks and guns. Once assembled, the most stupendous overseas undertaking of all times would begin.

As in the invasion convoys mounted in the British Isles, rumors and bewilderment dwelt overtime with the men of the Western Task Force—particularly regarding possible areas of landing. And no wonder! This was a big-time operation, if size meant anything. The Southern Attack Group had joined the oceanic meeting with ninety-nine vessels of all types; fifty-four ships made up the northern landing force. The Atlantic was sprinkled with grey hulls, smoke-bellowing stacks, sturdy masts and raised booms. Sometimes the men on board the transports counted fifty or more craft upon the horizon.

Led by the flagship of the escorting naval fleet the *USS Augusta,* the task force zig-zagged northeast, west, northeast and finally southeast toward Africa. Bright moonlight nights, punctuated by a few squalls, kept illness at a minimum. Transports were heavily-loaded, however, and space was at a premium. Men slept on wire-spring or canvas bunks—usually four tiers high. Some slept on the decks . . . when the weather was good. During daylight hours a place to sit upon the bare deck was prized highly. Most GIs ate standing, with waits of one hour and more (for serving) not uncommon. After being stationed at the largest artillery post in the world, the *Raiders* and *Go-Devils* were conserving room! Landing craft and a hundred and one other items stowed on the open decks, furthermore, gave daily reminder that *this was not a pleasure cruise!*

Two days at sea passed . . . then the inquisitive soldiers aboard the vessels of the convoy learned of their amazing destinations. For the 47th C.T. it was to be Safi, French Morocco. Their landing would begin with one of the finest pieces of naval deception of the war; it would end with a smashing victory. The plan of action is told best by the man who led the 47th, Colonel (Brigadier General) Edwin H. Randle:

"*The Southern Attack Group* . . . consisting of the 47th Regimental Combat Team (reinforced) . . . and one Combat Command (less one battalion) from the 2nd Armored Division, supported by the Auxiliary Aircraft Carrier *Santee,* the battleship *New York,* the cruiser *Philadelphia* and three destroyers, was to land at Safi, 130 miles south of Casablanca, establish a beachhead under cover of which the medium tanks could be unloaded at the docks, and prevent the French garrison at Marrakech from reinforcing Casablanca. General Harmon was to move north with his armor and assist in the capture of Casablanca by attacking it from the south, leaving the 47th RCT to hold Safi."

An additional objective for the Southern Attack Group was the capture of the Safi Airport, in line with the mission of the invasion.

Accompanying the 47th C.T. was a majority of General Patton's armor—aboard the sea train *Lakehurst.* This cargo was of enormous importance to the conduct of the invasion. To carry out the mission of the Western Task Force it was necessary that the tanks be unloaded as soon as possible. Safi was to be seized quickly, so as to afford initial protection for landing these armored vehicles on the docks.

> The mission assigned the Western Task Force was:
>
> *Attack western Morocco; seize and secure the port of Casablanca as a base for future operations to the north and northeast; eliminate or cripple the enemy air force and secure by dark of D-Day at least one airfield as a base for land-based planes.*
>
> To carry out these orders General Patton desired to effect landings and capture three primary objectives—Safi, Port Lyautey and Fedala.

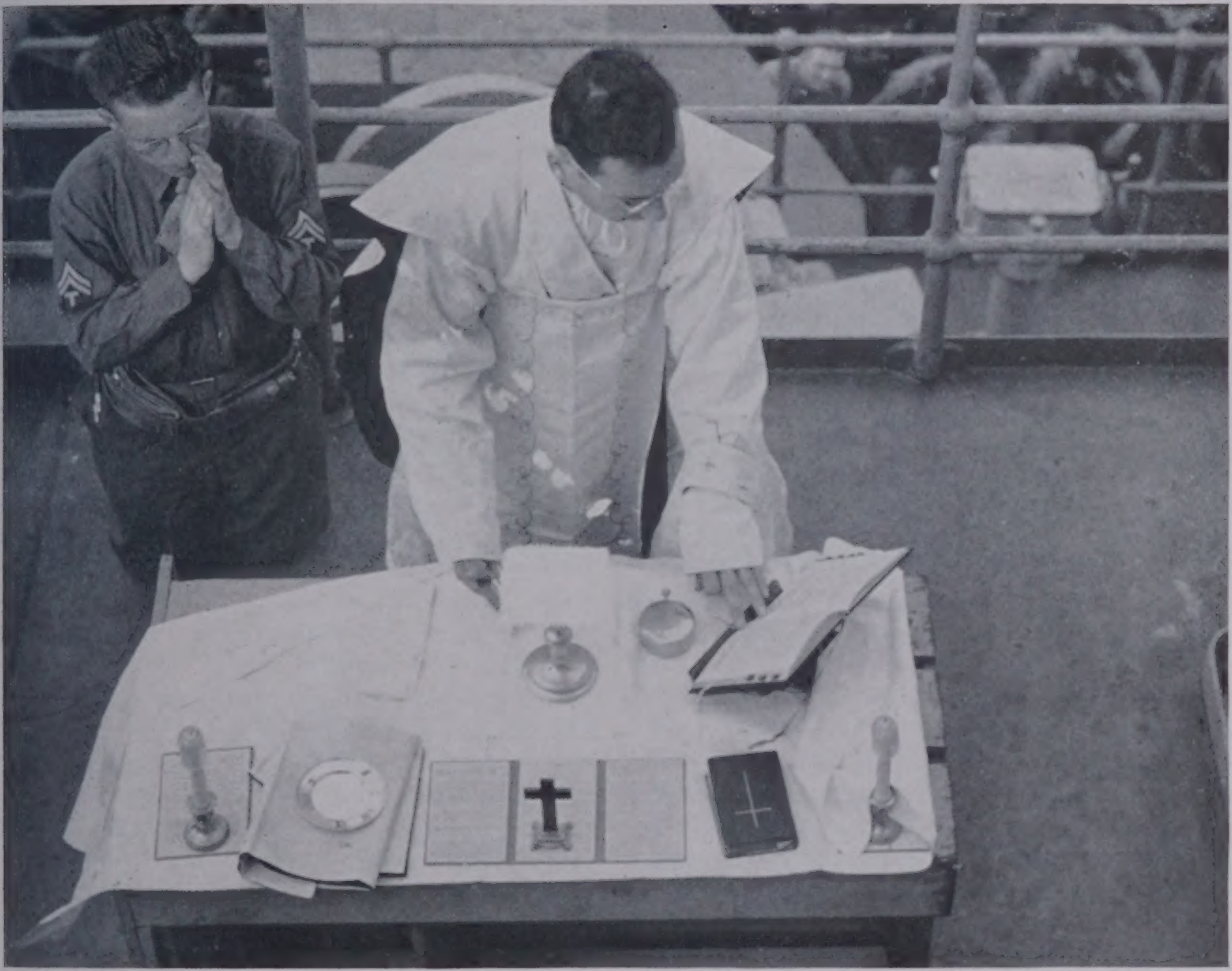
Two destroyers, each carrying a rifle company of the 47th, were to be used in accomplishing the difficult task of capturing the harbor. The remainder of the team traveled aboard the transports *Harris, Dix* and *Lyons*—all except a special mission, that is, which consisted of Second Lieutenant William G. Duckworth and five enlisted men who crossed the Atlantic on a submarine. Theirs was a secret task—one which might have originated from the pen of Jules Verne or H. G. Wells.

But whether his was a special or routine assignment, each member of the combat team immediately set to work to prepare for the occasion. Continuous night classes were held for officers and non-coms; daytime lectures instructed troops on the terrain; accurately prepared maps and aerial photos completed the picture. Pamphlets of information on North African customs, taboos, monetary systems, the complex political situation and variant topography were issued to all troops. It seemed as if very little had been overlooked by the Army—even Arabic interpreters, in the persons of Staff Sergeant George E. Shalhoup and Pfc. John S. Simon were assigned to the *Raider* regiment. The natives, however, mostly spoke Berber.

* * * *

PART of the deception of the Safi landing was gained from the use of two destroyers, which were disguised to resemble French vessels. Initially, 20 men and 2 officers from Company *K* and a similar number from Company *L* were aboard these warships, the *Bernadou* and the *Cole.* On November 7, 1942, at 2 P.M., the remaining members of the two companies boarded the destroyers at sea. That evening, with first combat just hours away, every preparation was rushed to completion. The last meals were served—steak, chicken, turkey. To some, this was like eating a condemned man's meal. But gripes were absent in the tense and stuffy holds.

Disembarkation rendezvous was reached at 11:30 P.M. The convoy was just eight miles off the shore of Safi. All minds now turned to one thought—INVASION! Battle-equipped GIs began streaming up the passageways and onto the main deck. Here they stood . . . awaiting the command to go over the side, down the nets and into landing craft. On their left arms, below the Ninth Division insignia



PRE-INVASION SERVICES

was an armband bearing a replica of the American flag. Each man carried two canteens of water and a full day's rations. Armament variations consisted of a *Springfield* or *M-1* Rifle, or a *Thompson* Sub-Machine gun, plus grenades, ammunition, entrenching tools, combat knives, bayonets, good luck charms, the new *M-1* helmet—and the ever-present and cumbersome gas mask.

Minutes ticked by and the first wave was straining at the leash. Landing craft were lowered into the calm sea; nets rolled down over the shells of the transports. Below in the electric atmosphere of the holds were the waves of *Raiders* who would follow. They played cards, joked, thought of home and waited—waited for *their* turn. It now was November 8, 1942 . . . D-Day! Twelve-thirty . . . twelve forty-five . . . one o'clock . . the shrill voice systems of the convoy bade the first wave go over the side! Human cargo filled the nets . . the landing boats quickly became loaded . . . grim-faced and wide-eyed doughboys were ready. Equally wide-eyed coxswains steered the craft toward Safi; and the eight miles to shore shortened to seven . . . six . . . five . . . four and one-half. On swept the amphibious fleet, into the misty black night. It was as if the *Charge of the Light Brigade* had taken to the sea—for flying from the stern mast of each invasion boat was *Old Glory* . . . defiantly waving in the breeze!

* * * *

A RECEPTION party was preparing to meet the 47th Combat Team on the shores of Safi . . . with loaded arms. Forewarned by the successful and well-timed landings in Algeria, and by the capture of certain pro-American leaders (who had tried to arrange capitulations), the French were rushing to offer resistance. Excerpts from the battle notes of Moroccan headquarters give the Vichy French version:

> A solemn obligation had been undertaken to defend our Empire against all comers. It was the only means to prevent the Germans from assuming that defense themselves and occupying the whole of France and her Empire . . . on the night of November 7-8, General Nogues (Resident General of Morocco) was warned that the debarkation of American troops could be considered imminent, and that certain factions intended to seize control of the government in Morocco . . . General Nogues immediately issued the *Alert* order.

The Safi garrison had been warned to action by its parent organization the division at Marrakech (97 miles southeast of Safi). About 450 officers and men were getting into position as the landings occurred. In addition, shore batteries made ready to render the harbor uncomfortable for any invader. But the Americans had a *secret weapon!*

Shortly before H-Hour, an American submarine slipped unnoticed within the range of Cape Safi coastal batteries. The underseas craft rose noiselessly to the surface, and her water-tight conning tower was unbuttoned to the sky. This was the naval *transport* of Lt. Duckworth and his five assistants. Their mission soon would be accomplished. A rubber boat was lowered into the rippling water . . . and the gallant sextette cautiously toed its way on board. They headed for the long jetty of Safi Harbor. When the objective was reached the little tube affair bobbed to a halt. With precision and haste the invaders got into position and held an *infra-red* lamp near the end of the mole. It would remain unseen by all, except those aboard destroyers which carried special equipment.

Safi

The very nature of Safi gives an initial advantage to the defender. Captain (Lt. Col.) Randall H. Bryant, Intelligence Officer of the 47th Combat Team correctly summarized the area three weeks prior to the invasion:

> *This port lies in a natural curving indention of the coast south of Cape Safi. It is sheltered to the north by Tower Point. High cliffs overhanging the north shore, shelter the port against northerly trade winds. The harbor is formed by two moles, the Jetee Principal (315 feet wide) and the Jetee Transversale (159 yards long and used for phosphate loading). With strong westerly winds, the anchorage off Safi is untenable.* . . .

Cutting through the Atlantic toward the harbor were the destroyers *Cole* and *Bernadou.* Guided by the *invisible light,* the warships nosed into the port entrance at 4:28 A.M. As they entered, machine guns and rifle fire opened up on them. On the cliffs overlooking the harbor gate were two fixed 75mm harbor guns, which blasted out a challenge to determine the nationality of the vessels. But deception again played an important role.

The *Bernadou* and *Cole* had been disguised as French men-of-war at Bermuda. In the dimness of early morning it hardly was possible that they could be distinguished visually from friendly warships. The destroyer captains cleverly manipulated their way under the fixed batteries. The *Bernadou* returned the same signal as challenged them, using her three-inch guns for the reply. Temporarily confused, the French gun crews allowed the American ships to get inside the line of fire.

However, the *Bernadou* had gone too near the shore. She ran aground on a sand spit inside the harbor at 4:30 A.M. The jolt was terrific, and as the initial excitement reached its peak, a hostile 25mm anti-tank gun was knocked out by the destroyer's guns. All during this time, Company *K* (Captain Gordon Sympson) was below deck.

There was a reason that the men were not above when the *Bernadou* grounded. The regimental commander believed that fire from machine guns on the jetty would injure anyone on the open decks. He had specified that all troops would remain under cover while entering the harbor. As the vibrating hull nosed into the sand an ominous feeling per-

SAFI HARBOR

vaded the holds below. Men huddling inside were under the impression, since it was dark outside and blacked out on board, that shell fire had destroyed their ship. But it had not . . . not by a long-shot!

After the grounding, plucky Captain Sympson yelled below, "Anybody hurt?" . . . nobody was . . . "Well, let's get the hell out of here!" urged the company commander.

A single rope net was slung over the bow. One-by-one the men filed on deck and made their way forward . . . over the side. The soldiers streamed onto the beach and out of sight. The time was 4:35 A.M.; the day was Sunday. Thus began the invasion of Safi, with the landing of Company *K*.

* * * *

IN HER docking the *Cole* was more fortunate. She safely passed through the port and rammed the merchandise pier, pulling up for a landing. Company *L* (Captain Thomas Wilson) began its invasion at 4:45 A.M.

Meanwhile, the destroyer *Mervine* had countered the fire of the harbor battery, knocking out these guns just as the *Bernadou* was unloading her troops. Company *K* quickly cleared the waterfront area of the enemy and turned its efforts southward, establishing a roadblock on the highway to Mogador. Company *L*, having disembarked from the *Cole*, took charge of the harbor vicinity, protecting the valuable docks against sabotage. Acting under previous plans, Captain Wilson dispatched one platoon to capture the Shell Oil Company installation—300 yards from the waterfront—which was taken against heavy machine-gun fire. All during this time rifle fire had been coming from the jetty and mixed weapons were blasting out death from the hills.

When the initial firing had commenced, four 130mm rifles of the coastal batteries on Pointe-de-la-Tour (Tower Point) had opened fire on the transports. Heavy guns of the battleship *New York* and the cruiser *Philadelphia* replied with their convincing power. The *New York* knocked the control tower out of action with the second salvo of her 14-inch guns. This ricocheting shellfire killed the occupants (including the French naval officer in charge) and destroyed the director. The battery continued to fire in an independent manner, not hitting any vessels. Finally, the gun crews were forced to flee under the withering bombardment of the two capital ships in the bay. The knockout came at 4:45 A.M.

LCVP's followed the destroyers ashore and at 5 A.M. elements of the 70th Tank Battalion (1st Platoon, Co. *B*) and the 47th Infantry Reconnaissance Platoon hit the beach near the grounded *Bernadou.* One-half of the Recon unit moved southward into Safi . . . seizing the telephone and telegraph exchanges . . . taking care of the French 25mm anti-tank gun and crew across the street from the Post Office Building. A platoon of Company *B* (47th) worked its way up the north hill and occupied the battery of guns which were put out of action by the *New York.* The Americans capped their seizure with the hoisting of the Stars and Stripes!

> *Opposing the landings were the legendary troops of the storied French Foreign Legion.*

The first assault waves ashore brought the 1st Battalion Landing Team (Major Frederick C. Feil). These amphibious invaders were met by artillery, rifle and machine-gun fire from the high ground north and northeast of the harbor. For over one hour the 1st was held up . . . then a crushing advance began. *Raiders* scaled a 300-foot cliff after crossing the beaches under fire. They pushed on, capturing, destroying or driving out all semblance of resistance. On drove the 1st Battalion . . . until its doughboys had organized their beachhead objectives.

It was daybreak before the 2nd Battalion (Major Louis Gershenow) landed. Despite an explosion and fire at sea, however, the battalion was putting ashore at Yellow Beach (8 miles south of Safi) by 9:30. As this unit was turning north, other elements of the 47th C.T. were completing their landings. The 3rd Battalion (Major John B. Evans), minus Companies *K* and *L*, was debarking near the center of the town; and the 84th Field Artillery Battalion was rolling onto land as well—notwithstanding the soft sand and rough coastal terrain.

Safi still resounded to the fire of the invasion. Company *K* had been fighting against rifle and machine-gun fire at the French barracks since 7:30 A.M., and assistance was needed. When the remainder of the 3rd Battalion landed, Major Evans dispatched Companies *I* and *M* to aid in capturing the Caserne. Company *I* was halted to the north by fire, while *K* received an attack from three *Renault* light tanks. At a temporary loss as to the proper

NEW TENANTS SCAN HORIZON FROM POINTE-DE-LA-TOUR CONTROL TOWER

usage of their newly-issued rocket launchers *(Bazookas)*, doughboys instinctively fired their less complicated rifle grenades at the armor. These shots were dramatically successful. The vehicles were knocked out. The ingenious Americans then quickly turned them around and fired back at the besieged barracks with French weapons!

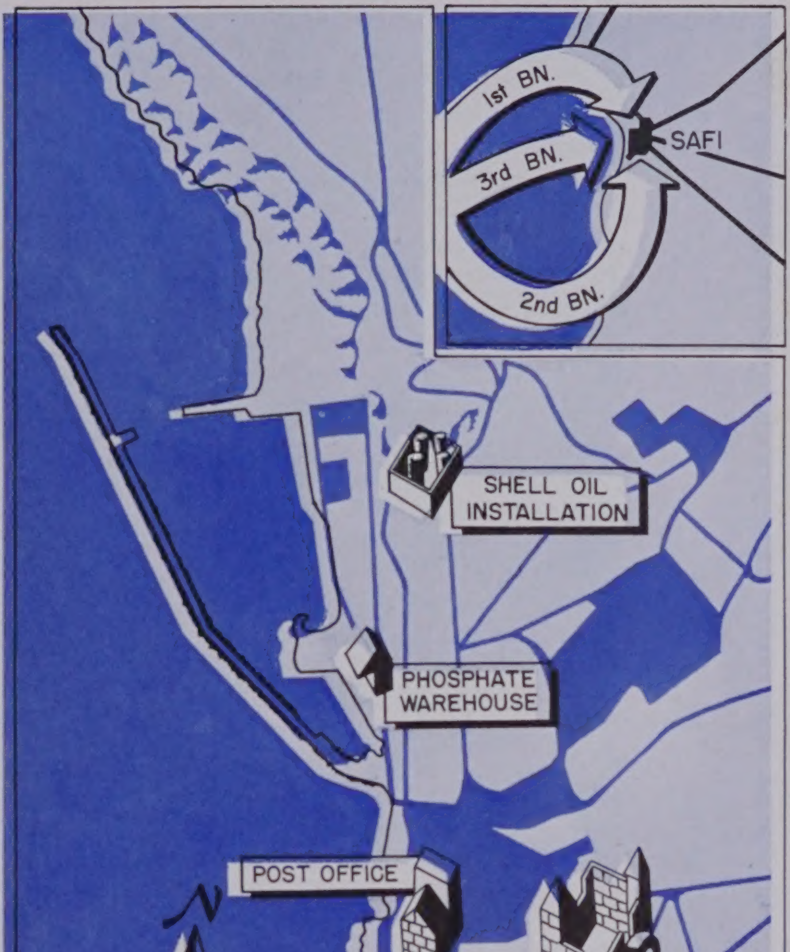
Heavy weapons now came upon the scene with the arrival of Company *M* (Captain James J. Johnston). The bombardment was terrific, as mortar crews had a field day lobbing-in deadly 81mm high explosive shells at a steady rate. The defenders had had enough and surrendered at 3:30 P.M. French officers later stated that they had wanted to give up one hour earlier, but that the heavy fire had prevented their doing so!

General Harmon began to move his armor ashore at noon—commencing with the light tanks. Mediums were unloaded from the sea train *Lakehurst* three hours later. A few light tanks were dispatched on reconnaissance twelve miles south along the Marrakech highway, with the mission of forestalling any attack by the strong Marrakech garrison. Other tankers assembled for the final drive the 2nd Armored was to make on Casablanca.

Inside Safi itself, opposition had melted away to sniping. By 4 P.M. the 47th C.T. had reached all of its objectives and was holding a 10,000-yard beachhead! The last big guns had stopped firing, too; for the 64th Foreign Legion's rifles south of Safi had been abandoned with the approach of the 2nd Battalion. With November 8th drawing to a close, positions were consolidated and a regimental command post was opened inside the Phosphate Building offices (on the docks). Colonel Randle was appointed commander of Military District No. 5, and the first area occupation by elements of the Ninth Division overseas began.

By evening there were approximately 300 prisoners-of-war—ironically enclosed within their own barracks. The French view is told best by their battle notes:

> Safi, attacked by vastly superior forces and having very limited means of defense, fell but the Americans did not spread out from it.



After the second day events happened at a rapid pace. Naval observation planes flashed a report that an armored column was moving on Safi from the direction of Marrakech. Aircraft from the auxiliary carrier *Santee* immediately took to the air. (Fortunately, the French commander of the Marrackech airfield was pro-American and halted all Moroccan aircraft from leaving the ground). U.S. Navy flyers, with armored infantry and tanks of the 2nd Armored destroyed the motorized infantry spearheads of the column. After the late-afternoon skirmish ended, the French decided to halt any further counter-offensives beyond the hills outside of Safi.

As the smoke and destruction of the column began to settle, the American tankers were withdrawn for the 130-mile march upon Casablanca. While the 47th C.T. held the Safi area, expecting an offensive against its thinly-held beachhead, the *blitz-buggies* of General Harmon made a spectacular thrust to the port of Mazagan—which was enroute to the main objective. Mazagan was surrounded by tanks and the French garrison surrendered without firing a shot. The road to Casablanca was open with the removal of this final barrier. Destroyers loaded with fuel and supplies had followed the armored spearheads up the coast; they now berthed at Mazagan harbor, while the French troops aided in unloading necessary cargoes. Refueled, the 2nd Armored turned tracks northward—General Patton was calling urgently for armor.

* * * *

HISTORY definitely was made during the morning of November 11, 1942 when a group of four French officers from the Marrakech garrison called upon Colonel Randle. They were carrying a flag of truce, as well as written instructions from General Nogues to cease firing and remain in position pending peace negotiations. The 47th's commander had not received any such information. But he told the envoys that he would order his troops to hold their fire—so long as their opponents remained in place. The Colonel immediately radioed for confirmation. From Western Task Force Headquarters came the order to agree to a suspension of hostilities. On the following day another French group approached under flag of truce to say that hostilities were terminated. There was a delay while Colonel Randle radioed for confirmation once again—it came . . . the armistice was official.

For the 47th C.T. on the southernmost flank of the entire invasion this meant both peace and, later, a new ally . . . their former foe. But the real story of the armistice had its colorful transpiration in another area—to the north. Here other landings had taken place. Rough battles marked these beachheads . . . one, the scene of the most bitterly-resisted

DOWNED FRENCH PLANES AT MAZAGAN

ENROUTE TO INVASION

advance of the Ninth Division's combat teams. Colonel de Rohan once related the details to the late President Franklin D. Roosevelt. It is an exciting story which began at sea.

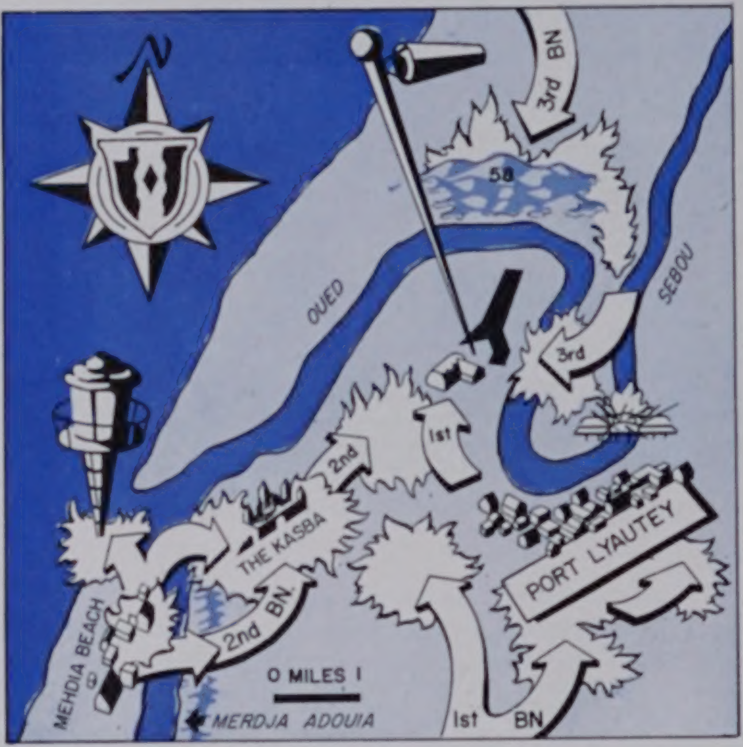
* * * *

ACTUALLY there isn't any glory in combat . . . at least there isn't for the men who do the fighting. War is a dirty, grimy, nerve-wracking, wearisome nightmare of *kill or be killed*. Sometimes, out of this wretched existence can be pieced together a story of self-sacrificing heroism or humorous remembrance. Occasionally, the constant recounting of a battle's finer points reveals a really colorful saga. The fighting for Port Lyautey and the fabled Kasba forms just such a vivid chapter of *Operation Torch*. And it all began at sea!

The 60th Regimental Combat Team rode to war and adventure in eight transports and one destroyer. It wasn't an excursion cruise, as any of the *sardine-packed* GIs would have admitted. But the Atlantic was fairly calm and (maybe) some voyagers even enjoyed the trip. At any rate, after five days at sea the convoy was agog, speculating about the recently announced invasion objective for the 60th in North Africa . . . Port Lyautey. Few of the passengers on board had heard of their beachhead area prior to this announcement. All they had known upon boarding the gangplank was that they were part of Sub-Task Force *Goalpost*.

Goalpost was the code name for the Northern Attack Group, smallest operational command of Patton's Western Task Force. In addition to the 60th C. T., the diminutive force was composed of a landing battalion of the 2nd Armored Division and several attached units. Supporting gunpower for the assault was to be furnished by the battleship *Texas*, the cruiser *Savannah* and several destroyers, including the *USS Dallas,* which carried a special raider party from the 60th Infantry.

A great deal of interest centered around the photos and special maps of invasion beaches. Many soldiers were surprised, however, to discover that the operation hinged upon speedy initial capture of an ancient fort . . . the Kasba (citadel). Prior to seeing these maps, *Kasba* (or *Kasbah*) had reminded most Americans of movie star Charles Boyer making love to captivating Hedy Lamarr within the confines of an Algerian native village. One point was certain, *this* Kasba did not look too much like that of the contemporary film *Algiers,* and *Pepe Le Moco* probably would turn out to be a myth!



* * * *

PORT LYAUTEY, the second most important anchorage of French Morocco, lies about six miles inland—on the Oued (River) Sebou. The city is approximately 80 miles to the northeast of Casablanca, 120 miles southwest of Gibraltar and a short jaunt to the military headquarters town of Rabat.

The Oued Sebou forms an inverted *U* (horseshoe) bend just before it empties into the Atlantic. At the western tip of the bend is the picturesque Kasba, once heavily fortified by the French and witness to some of the bitterest engagements of the invasion. To the southwest of the Kasba is a summer resort on the Atlantic shore—Plage de Mehdia (Mehdia Beach). Sitting on the eastern end of the horseshoe is Port Lyautey. Slightly north of the city—say four miles north on the top of the river's bend—is an excellent airport. This field was the primary objective of the landing force.

Cliffs, rocks and hills dot and cover the coastal regions, and man-made escarpments help to make the terrain bounding Port Lyautey a source of concern to any invader. After an assaulting force leaves Mehdia Plage it must climb a series of rises and proceed upward to a long ridge. This ridgeline forms the western bank of a romantic looking lagoon (Merdja Adouia); the latter separates the beach from Lyautey for quite some distance. Merdja Adouia follows a straight line from the Kasba-Mehdia area to the southwest. To make matters more difficult (for an invader) the eastern bank of the lagoon is a very steep ridgeline, which hinders the carrying on of modern mechanized warfare beyond the Merdja Adouia.

A route then lay to the north through the fortified Kasba-Mehdia region. The only other possibilities of approach to the Port were to come in from the south on land or the north by water. The entire strategy of the invasion rested upon the commanding position of the Kasba; it controlled the entrance of the Oued Sebou . . . it blocked the roads to the airport and Port Lyautey. With the capture of this old citadel the remainder of the operation would prove fairly simple. There was but one catch . . . the French had drawn the same conclusions as the Americans and had planned accordingly!

Goalpost's scheme of attack looked well—on paper. The mission of the northern force was to capture

TENSE GIs HEADING FOR FIRST COMBAT

Port Lyautey and its airport, then turn south and seize the airdrome at Sale (20 miles south). This did not appear to be too much of an undertaking for General Truscott's force—especially if the French could be taken by surprise. It was assured if any of the proposed capitulations succeeded. To aid in these operations, the *Dallas* was scheduled to steam up the river and land her raider party at the airport. Yes, it all looked well on paper, but the hand of fate soon would wreck these well laid plans!

* * * *

IN RENDEZVOUS—off Mehdia Plage—lay the trembling grey hulls of Sub-Task Force *Goalpost* . . . (the 60th was aboard the *Clymer, Susan B. Anthony, Florence Nightingale, Allen* and *Algarab.*) The weather was excellent for an invasion. It was a black, moonless night and the sea was calm. November 7, 1942, was ticking off its last fleeting minutes . . . a new day, D-Day shortly would be at hand. But the convoy was behind schedule . . . it had arrived forty minutes late . . . and an additional sixty minutes were wasted through confusion and loss of formation. Those were precious minutes . . . life-saving minutes, and they were lost. With this time gone the hours of disembarkation and landing were moved up; the assault would take place at 5:30 A.M. rather than 4 A.M., a fatal move.

If the vessels had been on time much grief and loss of life would have been spared—for the invasion was to coincide with an historic appeal by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, which was broadcast in

French via shortwave radio to the people of North Africa . . .

> "Mes Amis (My Friends) . . . we have come among you to repulse the cruel invaders . . . Have faith in our words . . . Help us where you are able. Vive la France eternelle!"

Even as this message was being broadcast General Nogues had alerted the Moroccan Coast. Surprise was known to be lost when a fleet of five French steamers, lights ablaze, cut across the bows of the leading convoy ships. The destroyer *Allen* received a message from one—"Be warned . . . alert on shore for 5 A.M.!" To the first landing waves that terse warning meant that little cover could be gained by darkness . . . no surprise would accompany the invasion . . . the enemy was alerted . . . he would be awaiting the *Go-Devils* with fire and steel . . . at best, this would be a rough battle!

It was slightly after 4:30 A.M. . . . the first three waves of infantrymen were clambering over the sides of their transports, down the landing nets and into thin-shelled and uncomfortable LCVP's. "Shove off!" It was a tense moment . . . heading for Morocco! GIs grasped their rifles a bit harder . . . officers tried to set a good example . . . and down in the bottom of the bouncing landing craft crouched the lot . . . American soldiers, about to earn their birth-right.

The LCVP's sped toward shore. When the first waves were about 700 yards distant, searchlights from the beach picked up one of the Navy scout boats and a warning red flare burst above the mouth of the Sebou—signaling that the invasion had begun. Then a roaring thunder of shellfire broke loose from the coastal batteries, aimed at the warships and their brood of landing craft. Salvos from the destroyer *Roe* silenced the French guns, and other warships joined in shelling the coast.

American feet began hitting the shore when the 2nd Battalion (Major John H. Dilley) came in at 5:40 A.M. There was no initial resistance—then French aircraft suddenly swooped down to strafe the beach. Men began to fall . . . the 60th's first casualties.

To the south doughboys of the 1st Battalion (Major Percy D. McCarley, Jr.) rode in on the surf and landed 2,800 yards north of their assigned beach. Inexperienced coxswains, confusion and shelling had altered their course. But there were no casualties for the 1st and it moved quickly on toward the lagoon.

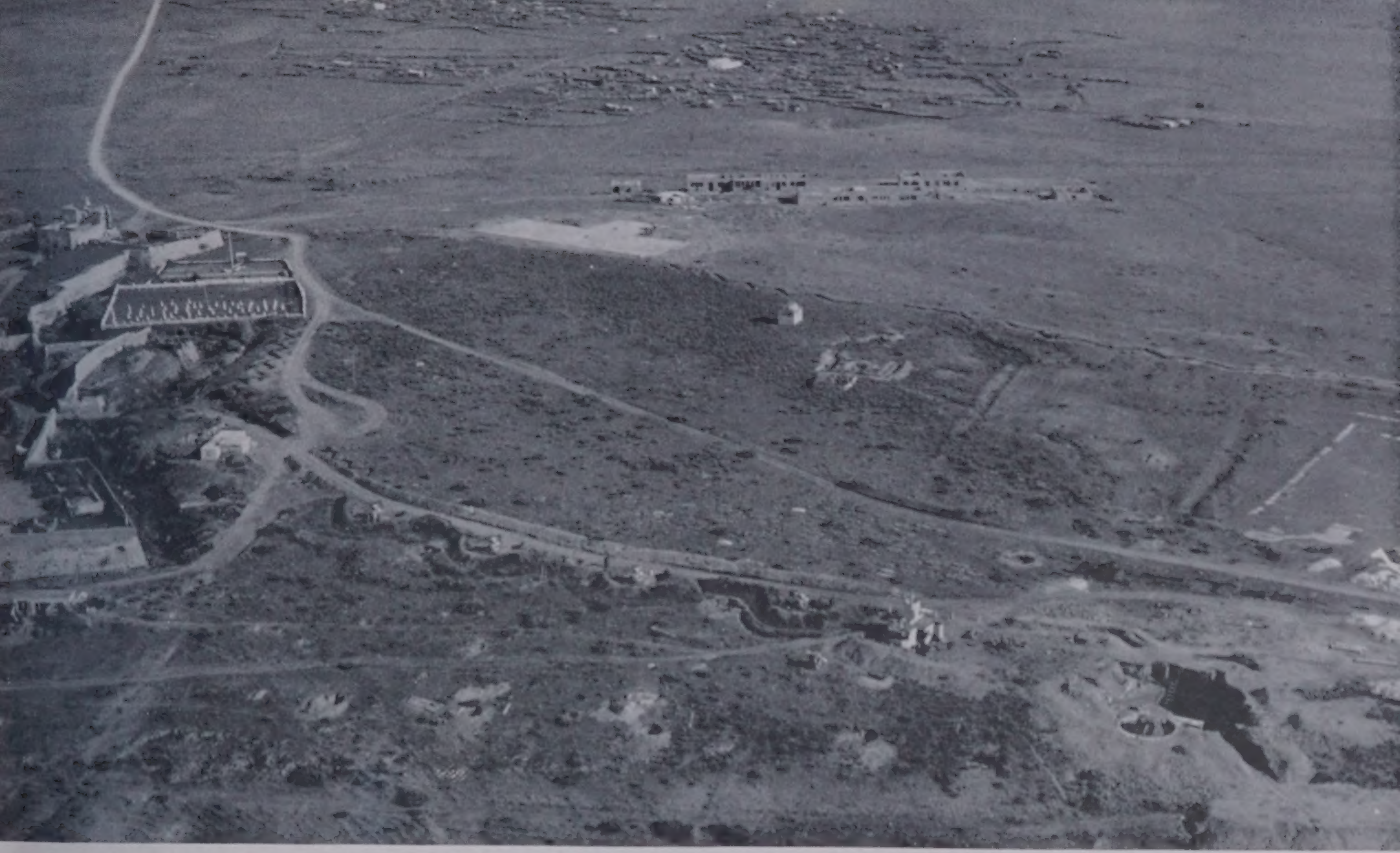
Further north more coxswains had overshot their mark, and the 3rd Battalion (Lt. Colonel John J. Toffey, Jr.) was on the spot. Troops might not make the safety of land if time were wasted. Already, two of the battalion's landing boats had been upset by near-misses of aerial bombs. The battalion commander ordered his men put ashore immediately, believing this wiser than to risk retracing the shoreline to their assigned beach—which was five miles south. At 6:30 A.M. the 3rd piled ashore—an intermingled mass of companies, squads and men. Four French planes now appeared upon the scene, strafing. But the pilots met accurate fire from the 692nd CAAA Battalion, which knocked two ships out of the sky and chased the others homeward.

Daylight and French armor found the 1st Battalion reorganizing in the low ground west of the lagoon. During the noon hour four light tanks and two motorcycles attacked Company *A*. Thus began a day of tank sorties and clashes with Foreign Legion cavalry, which was active along the edge of picturesque Mamora Cork Forest. These blows were beaten off with 37mm anti-tank guns, grenades, bazookas and a steady hail of lead from the machine guns of Company *D*.

* * * *

AT DAYBREAK, French coastal batteries had begun hammering at the transports off Mehdia Plage. The vessels were forced to reassemble 15 miles out in the safety of the open sea. Heavy surfs had hindered the landing of artillery and supplies, and this new development meant a delay in restocking the fighting men with food and ammunition. Of all units affected by this shortage, hardest hit was the 2nd Battalion Landing Team.

No Allied unit met stiffer opposition than that which the 2nd Battalion encountered near the Kasba-Mehdia area. American ship-to-shore communica-



THE KASBA (LEFT) AND VICINITY

tions were severed, eliminating naval gun support for the greatly outnumbered battalion. Artillery was not available to counter the French 75's, which bombarded the attackers during much of the day. *Renault* tanks added their bit toward making the positions untenable. And Company *E* was destined to lose five of its six officers, several of whom were awarded posthumous *D.S.C.'s.*

It all began during the early hours of morning. The 2nd had worked its way around (and over) the lagoon by a diverse route, a movement necessitated by American naval fire which was falling upon the more logical route of advance. Part of Company *F* crossed the lagoon on rubber boats after clearing Mehdia Plage.

In semi-darkness and under two fires complete reorganization would have been a miracle, so the 2nd Battalion pushed forward quickly. The infantrymen advanced against three main objectives: the lighthouse on the point, the Kasba and the coastal batteries. First on the list was the lighthouse; this was a strong position and stopped the battalion in its tracks.

Heroic action was needed and it came from Company *E*. Second Lieutenant Charles Dushane, Corporal (1st Sgt.) Frank L. Czar, Pfc. Theodore R. Bratkowitz and an unidentified private stormed the position. Crossing barbed wire entanglements under heavy fire the quartette charged the lighthouse and got inside. Shots rang out . . . then all was silent. A moment's wait . . . out walked the brave four with twelve prisoners.

The French retreated from the lighthouse and Companies *E* and *F* teamed up to clear the trench system which connected this strongpoint and the Kasba. Fifty prisoners already had been captured and many casualties inflicted. But the forces of the 2nd Battalion were a thinly spread line, dodging shells from both the foe and the Navy.

Afternoon overtook morning and the 2nd was fighting in the Cactus Village (a native village) east of the Kasba, where enemy superiority in armor and artillery was beginning to tell. The French were driving the battalion out of the Cactus Village, out of the lighthouse position and into the woods. As the troops began to withdraw under a mounting counterattack, Lt. Dushane and Corporal Czar rushed to meet the French thrust. It was an armored attack supported by infantry and the Americans had no anti-tank guns or artillery . . . not even a grenade!

Standing near the intrepid pair was a captured anti-tank gun. Its breech had been removed partly before being abandoned by the French. But that deficiency did not stop the two *Go-Devils*. Although the weapon was in full view of the approaching enemy Dushane and Czar manned it; Czar aimed the piece at the advancing armor, while Lt. Dushane set off the shells by firing at the base of each projectile with his *Tommy* gun. Continuing to fire they destroyed one tank and halted the attack. Corporal Czar miraculously escaped without injury, but Lt. Dushane died while operating the gun.

The hastily reorganized battalion now launched a swift counterattack. Another tank was knocked out and the French forces fled. Many were cut off within the Cactus Village and surrendered. The foe had left his dead and wounded where they had fallen, retiring to the protection of the Kasba . . . pouring out lead and shellfire to stem the 2nd's advance.

It was at this point that Pfcs. Clarence L. Mohler and John R. Fisher sprang into action. The two GIs climbed the fortress walls after approaching the Kasba under fire. From atop hazardous perches they emptied their automatic rifles into the French defenders, diverting their attention. Meanwhile, the 2nd Battalion peppered the main gate of the citadel with fire, while attacking infantrymen slipped inside and captured many surprised defenders. With these prisoners the 2nd withdrew to the forest and began to dig in and reorganize for the night. More troops were landing on the beach at this time and these were rushed to the front—to aid in forestalling and halting any counterassault by the reinforced and still-growing French garrison.

A high escarpment blocked the speedy unloading of heavy weapons on the north beach. All vehicles and half-tracks landed the first day, but cannon and artillery could not negotiate beyond this shore until November 9th.

The 3rd Battalion did not reorganize on the north beach but proceeded en masse to its first objective—Hill 58. This position was reached by 10 A.M. and it immediately was evident that the excellent observation from that height could assist in bringing concentrations upon French batteries and installations across the river. Within a short time the *Texas* and *Kearney* were contacted and possible targets came under the rain of naval explosives for the remainder of the day.

Unfortunately, the 3rd Battalion had assumed that the Kasba already was in American hands. Consequently, its route was altered, by-passing the high ground from which the battalion was to have supported the 2nd Battalion by fire. This additional onslaught would have assisted the attackers of Kasba-Mehdia greatly.

The situation at the end of the first day was not wholly favorable. The tides had made it difficult to land supplies; communications were inadequate; many invasion boats were beached in the heavy surf. There were high sand dunes and scrub growth between the lagoon and the beach where the 1st Battalion landed. This terrain was delaying the entry of light tanks and full-tracks into battle; thus the armor of *Goalpost* would not disembark until Monday the 9th.

There is another side of the story, the French version. It is told in their battle notes:

> Mobile groups were formed and during the eighth counter-attacks executed aimed to confine the invader and reduce the bridgeheads attained . . . In the Port Lyautey area, after having gained a foothold at several points on the coast, the Americans were pushed back and confined within the limits of Mehdya. The opening bombardments and first air battles had put 50% of our aviation out of combat.

So ended D-Day, 1942!

* * * *

ENGLISHMEN stop for tea, Americans stop for coffee and Frenchmen stop for the night. The first night of combat for the 60th C.T. was quiet.

Dawn brought a dull morning and heralded the continuation of see-saw warfare. Armored columns and howitzers were active throughout the day. And, while the airport was the primary mission of the *Go-Devils,* the battle for the mystic Kasba became priority by necessity. Here the *Heroic Second* Battalion hurled itself against reinforced French and Moroccan units; while the 1st Battalion assisted from the south by placing pressure to the rear of the French line.

Opposition to the 1st Battalion mounted and then abated slowly; for against each counterattack, the battalion blasted replies with machine guns, mortars, tanks and supporting naval batteries. At 4 P.M. ten light tanks and two howitzers reinforced the 1st Battalion . . . the Americans were ready to drive on the airport. But any advance planned by this combination was ended sharply, as accurate French artillery churned up the route.

French bid the 2nd Battalion *good morning* with a punching drive into the left flank and bitter resistance near the battle-scarred lighthouse. The 2nd stuck back, hitting at the Kasba several times unsuccessfully; for the French had built up their defenses during the black hours of night. Then mortar and artillery concentrations became so intense around the lighthouse that the *Go-Devils* were forced to withdraw. Good news reached the hard-pressed 2nd Battalion finally . . . it soon would be supported by self-propelled 105mm howitzers. With this additional striking power the battalion could launch a victorious final assault and overrun the Kasba!

When American weapons failed to operate during action, Second Lieutenant William J. Voller instructed soldiers of the 60th in use and operation of captured enemy rifles. This field expedient enabled many units to continue the fight.

Frenchmen may stop for the night but they put up a pretty terrific defense during the hours of daylight. In the 3rd Battalion sector, north of the Sebou, Battery *C* (60th F.A.) had begun an artillery duel with the French airport batteries. At the same time the infantry was preparing to launch a river crossing under fire. Several bold attempts were made to span the Oued Sebou on rubber boats, but these failed. Later in the day a new strategy was tried. While a diversionary attack was launched by Companies *K* and *M*, Company *I* (modern version of the company which had crossed the *impossible* Meuse in 1918) negotiated the river.

Many heroic attempts were made upon a heavily mined and fortified bridge by *K* and *M*. They were backed up by Battery *C* and the shell-spitting turrets of the *USS Kearney*. Meanwhile, infantrymen of Company *I* waded, slipped and sloshed through the muddy banks of the Sebou, crawled into rubber boats and headed for the airport. By 9 P.M. the company had a muddy foothold on the far shore. In the deep mire, rain and blackness, advancing was so difficult that Company *I* dug in for the night. Few of the slime-covered and weary-boned GIs would have considered it too important at the time, but they were the first company of the Ninth Division to effect a river crossing by assault!

At the end of the second day future strategy was clearly evident. All efforts would be directed toward immediate capture of the dominating Kasba positions. After this, Colonel de Rohan's 60th C.T. would turn upon the airport. Other facts also were evident: by now the Americans had become battle-wise, and the French did not know where the triangular American drive would strike next.

Nights seldom are made for slumber on the line and this was, indeed, a slumberless night. The cursed beating of rain upon the helmets of tired GIs struck out a muffled *ping . . . ping . . . ping. Go-Devils* were running out of supplies and their equipment needed repair. The average soldier was cold, wet and unshaven. But the end shortly would be in sight!

During this black night of November 9-10, the 1st Battalion jumped off in the rain. Direction was hard to keep and soon was lost. In trying to regain its correct bearings the battalion ran into a machine-gun ambush and was split into three groups, each of which was forced to operate individually in the woods.

At dawn the command group was met by a troop of Foreign Legion cavalry under the command of a French colonel. Neither side opened fire for the French leader had words to this effect, "Haven't you heard, there is an armistice! I suggest that we return to our respective commanders and prevail upon them to draw up terms." The Americans agreed and both sides retired.

But there was no armistice as yet! Further down the road the 1st Battalion commander and his staff ran into a battalion of Foreign Legion infantry which was not at all in a *cease fire* mood. The Americans were taken prisoner at about 10 A.M. and the Legionnaires headed east. At 4 P.M. their captors stopped to eat. Major McCarley, the battalion C.O., saw his chance to escape and took it. He dashed into the woods, running most of the night back toward the American lines, where he arrived the next morning.

McCarley's battalion, meanwhile, was entering the southern end of Port Lyautey and capturing *truckloads* of prisoners. In the beginning of this action the American units were mostly small patrols but the French were fooled completely. 1st Battalion men captured a cafe full of enemy troops, then withdrew quickly and reappeared in another location. The *Go-Devils* had made the city believe itself surrounded and the port commander surrendered!

Upon receiving the surrender of Port Lyautey the battalion pressed on toward the airport. Here the 1st Moroccan Regiment waged a fierce battle . . . until its French colonel and his staff capitulated and ordered all troops in the vicinity to cease fighting. Before long the small units of the 1st Battalion were herding prisoners in numbers far exceeding their own, a fact which indicated speedy conclusion of hostilities.

At midnight, sensing the overwhelming defeat of French arms as inevitable, General Truscott instructed the commander of Company "D" to contact the French area commander and arrange for a meeting of the two generals for purposes of discussing an armistice.

Dawn of November 10th brought an all-out foray upon the Kasba. Infantry of the 2nd Battalion jumped off with two self-propelled 105's in support and by 9:30 A.M. the foe had withdrawn to the protection of the Kasba. On his heels, the 2nd tried to assault the main entrance to the fort—without success. The Kasba still was strong within its walls.

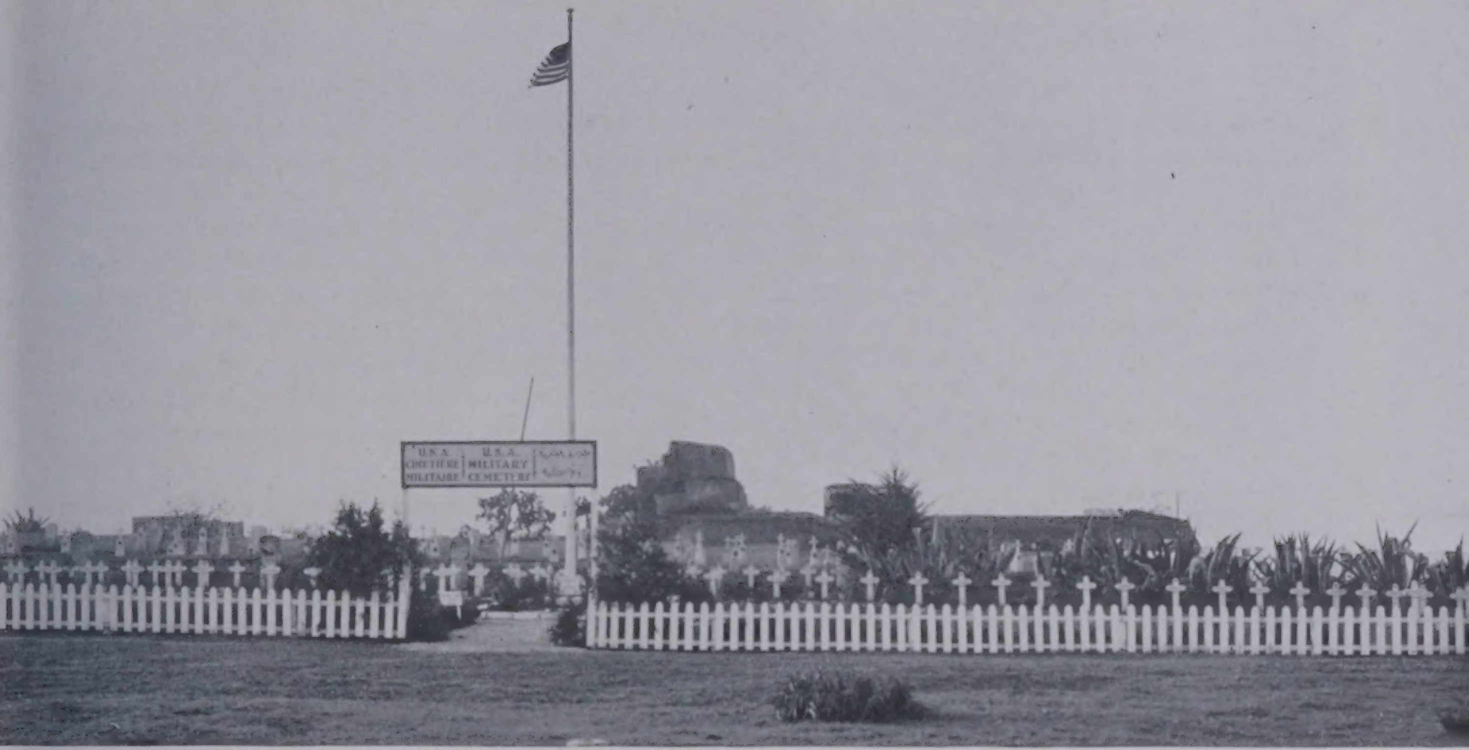
But the Americans were stronger. Navy dive-bombers and cannon blew open the gates and blasted paths through the walls. These devastating blows were followed by a 2nd Battalion onslaught which flooded the Kasba with a mad, surging rush of infantrymen, yelling and firing as they charged. The citadel gave up . . . there was little else to do. The 2nd counted its losses—they had been heavy that morning . . . 215 casualties!

Most of the 3rd Battalion had withdrawn to positions on Hill 58. During the 10th, however, in co-ordination with the *Dallas'* raider party, it moved on the airport and contacted the 1st Battalion. The latter had masses of prisoners caged in the field's hangars.

Surrender of the Kasba and the airport convinced the French of the desirability of laying down their arms. General Mathenet, commanding the Rabat and Port Lyautey regions, dispatched emissaries during the night of November 10th to arrange a truce. General Truscott immediately was informed of this offer and the two generals arranged a meeting for the following morning at 8 A.M. The spot chosen for the historic conference was the blooded Kasba, scene of the invasion's bitterest fighting. All hostilities ceased during the talks and both sides agreed not to change their positions. The result was an armistice . . . and the end of fighting between American and Frenchmen.

The capitulation of General Mathenet, moreover, was only a small portion of the joyous news that November 11, 1942. With the overwhelming victory of American arms assured, General Nogues had sent word to the American authorities that he desired a meeting with General Patton. The Western Task Force commander, barely halting a devastating attack planned to bring Casablanca to its knees, consented to discuss terms with the French commander.

At the same time, word was received that Hitler



THE AMERICAN KASBA CEMETERY

had sent his armies into the unoccupied (Vichy) zone of France. Admiral Darlan immediately assumed command of French North Africa in the name of Marshal Petain and called upon the defending army, navy and air force to cease all resistance. With these developments French and Moroccan opposition crumbled, and an armistice was proclaimed throughout France's African Empire. Thus twenty-four years to the day after the Allies had crushed Germany in another war, Armistice Day was celebrated again.

* * * *

PEACE with the French did not bring an end to war in North Africa. But the majority of the Ninth Division's far-flung combat teams were able to gain some measure of rest and recuperation before seeing further action. In the American custom, first priority after the cessation of hostilities was the proper burial of the dead.

At Safi the 47th Regimental Combat Team laid its comrades to final rest in the European Cemetery. In a special memorial service, Colonel Randle's entire command turned out as a last tribute to these fallen *Raiders*.

Just north of the beach at Port Lyautey, on the high ground overlooking the bitterly-contested Kasba, is an old French cemetery. It holds the remains of French Empire troops who died winning this same ground in 1911. Work was begun on an American plot adjacent to this cemetery, under the direction of the 60th's chaplains, particularly Chaplain Irving Tepper. When the plot was completed it was enclosed within a white picket fence and a simple sign was placed over the entrance—in French, English and Arabic: *U.S.A. Cemetery.*

On the day of the armistice the 39th C.T. was centered around Maison Carree, about 10 miles (over the hills) from the city of Algiers. Safi was home to the 47th C.T. while the badly-mauled 60th C.T. had its headquarters at Mehdia Plage.

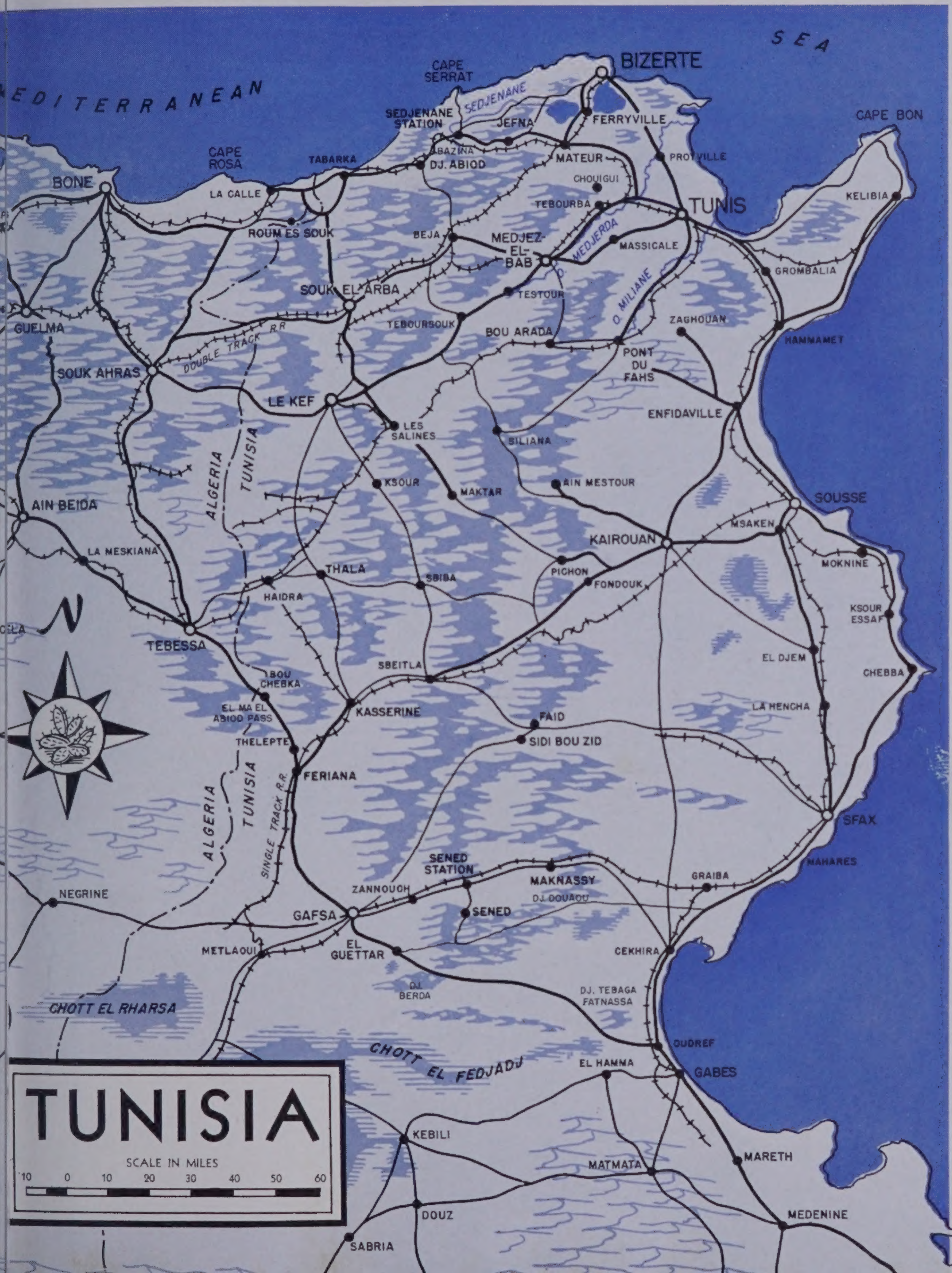
The tremendous importance of the victory in North Africa was as outstanding a fact to the Axis as it was to the Allies. The plans of Messrs. Adolf, Benito and Tojo heretofore had been strong factors in the fate of the globe. Now the picture was changing. Montgomery's forces were driving all Axis opposition out of Libya and into Tripolitania. With the exception of Tunisia, all of French North Africa had been brought into Allied hands *within four days!* The enemy was faced with a two-front war in Africa and his flanks were exposed in the Mediterranean. For the first time during World War II, the Allies were on the offensive.

Equally important, this victory meant that Germany would have to divert some of her manpower from the Russian front. With the loss of initiative in Russia, Hitler would complete his fantastic duplication of Napoleon's blunder. Thus the Soviets were able, at last, to begin their famous Stalingrad winter offensive, the decisive campaign which turned back the Nazi tide. Insuring success of this drive even further was the safety from any Japanese-German linkup in the Middle East.

Deception, valor, gambling and detailed planning had paid off in big dividends for the Allies. The tide had turned . . . and the spark of freedom was rekindled . . . rekindled by an operation known as *Torch*. But another battle was in the making . . . and another . . . and still another. The *Luftwaffe* was landing German troops in Tunisia at the rate of 1,500 per day. Concentration camps in Germany still were murdering thousands of tortured innocents daily. There was a lot to be done. This victory was simply a foundation upon which more would be built.

With the rest of the American Army, the combat teams of the Ninth Infantry Division now turned to the east . . . toward Von Arnim and the vaunted *Afrika Korps* of Marshal Rommel. A battle was finished, yes . . . but there was a war to be won!

Section III Photography Credits: Pages 53, 56, 58, 61, 63, 64, 66, 67, 69 are Official U.S. Army Signal Photos; 50 by 60th Infantry; 71 by USAF; 75 by 15th Engineers.


SEA
MEDITERRANEAN
BIZERTE
CAPE SERRAT
SEDJENANE
SEDJENANE STATION
JEFNA
FERRYVILLE
CAPE BON
CAPE ROSA
TABARKA
ABAZINA
DJ. ABIOD
MATEUR
PROTVILLE
BONE
LA CALLE
CHOUIGUI
TEBOURBA
TUNIS
KELIBIA
ROUM ES SOUK
BEJA
MEDJEZ-EL-BAB
O. MEDJERDA
MASSICALE
GROMBALIA
SOUK EL ARBA
TESTOUR
O. MILIANE
GUELMA
DOUBLE TRACK R.R.
TEBOURSOUK
BOU ARADA
ZAGHOUAN
HAMMAMET
SOUK AHRAS
PONT DU FAHS
LE KEF
ENFIDAVILLE
LES SALINES
SILIANA
ALGERIA
TUNISIA
KSOUR
MAKTAR
AIN MESTOUR
SOUSSE
AIN BEIDA
MSAKEN
KAIROUAN
LA MESKIANA
MOKNINE
THALA
SBIBA
PICHON
FONDOUK
HAIDRA
N
KSOUR ESSAF
TEBESSA
EL DJEM
SBEITLA
CHEBBA
BOU CHEBKA
EL MA EL ABIOD PASS
KASSERINE
LA HENCHA
FAID
THELEPTE
SIDI BOU ZID
FERIANA
ALGERIA
TUNISIA
SINGLE TRACK R.R.
SFAX
MAHARES
SENED STATION
MAKNASSY
GRAIBA
ZANNOUCH
DJ. DOUAOU
NEGRINE
GAFSA
SENED
METLAOUI
EL GUETTAR
CEKHIRA
DJ. BERDA
DJ. TEBAGA FATNASSA
CHOTT EL RHARSA
OUDREF
CHOTT EL FEDJADJ
EL HAMMA
GABES
TUNISIA
SCALE IN MILES
10
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
KEBILI
MARETH
MATMATA
DOUZ
MEDENINE
SABRIA

Section IV

Safari In O. D.

I—Southern Tunisia

DESERT victory was not complete with the fall of Morocco and Algeria. Hitler's veteran campaigners would not give up a continent without a struggle, especially when Africa was so important to Germany's scheme of the moment. As soon as Allied strategy became apparent, and it did within a few hours following the North African invasion, the enemy countered with a master stroke. German airborne and amphibious units were dispatched to Tunisia—with the blessing of the Vichy Government. Upward of 1,500 men landed daily, and these spread out from the fine airfield at Tunis and the important harbors along the coast to form a skeletonized front.

When the legions of Nazism invaded the unoccupied zone of France on November 11, 1942, their collaborating Laval-Petain regime promptly issued instructions that French possessions should resist invasion by the Allies but not by the Germans. Two days previously Marshal Petain had handed the American Ambassador his passport and, in retaliation for the *Torch* affair, had asked him to leave France. Next the aged marshal dispatched orders to Admiral Esteva, the French Resident General of Tunisia, which were equally antagonistic toward the Allied cause.

Whereas Darlan had sent word (under pressure) to halt any German invasion, Vichy had countered with orders to allow the Nazi forces entrance. Esteva chose the latter course, an action which helped the enemy to such an extent as to delay the invasion of Sicily by six months. He forced pro-Allied General Barre and his troops to evacuate their positions protecting Tunis, thus leaving the city without an organized means of repelling invasion. Actually, a regiment or two of infantry and a battalion of anti-aircraft artillery could have stopped the German entry into Tunisia. French officers at the Tunis airport saw German transports flying overhead and circling the field, an easy target . . . but no one hindered their landings.

Rommel was staging a series of strategic defensive battles in the desert of Tripolitania at this time, falling back before the sledge-hammer drive of a revitalized Eighth Army. The enemy's first Tunisian plan was to establish a well tied-in bridgehead, expand this foothold, and force an eventual linkup with Rommel's retreating *Afrika Korps* in the southern part of the province. Together, behind a natural mountain barrier, the *Afrika Korps* and the men of General Jurgin von Arnim planned to delay Allied victory for some time. Axis success in Tunisia meant knocking off schedule any proposed invasions of southern Europe, as well as giving the *Fatherland* more time to prepare.

For these same reasons it was imperative that the Allies clear Tunisia quickly. But moving an army to counter the German threat in Tunisia was a large order. In the first place, it seemed entirely possible that the enemy might march through neutral Spain, span the Straits of Gibraltar to Spanish Morocco and flank the Americans to the south—in this case the Ninth and 3rd Infantry Divisions and the 2nd Armored Division.

There was a threat, too, of action by Generalissimo Franco's army of 130,000 Spanish and Moroccan desert soldiers facing southward from the Moroccan border. Remembering the Italian *stab in the back* at a weakened France in 1940, it appeared feasible that Hitler might compel his satellite dictator friend to aid the Axis with blood as well as espionage.

> Observers who saw the Ninth Division in action in the Mediterranean considered it probably the crack U.S. Army unit in the North African theater.
>
> —Tom Wolfe (*NEA*)

The railroads were few and in poor condition in North Africa. On the score of shorter supply lines the enemy was far ahead; his last base was only 100 miles from the excellent ports of Tunis and Bizerte. German airfields in Sardinia, Sicily, Southern Italy and the Balkans were all-weather, permanent installations. And the initial advantage of well-trained and newly-equipped troops lay with the Germans.

In comparison, *Fighting French* forces in the desert could resist only with ancient rifles and inferior artillery . . . at least until they were withdrawn from action and re-equipped by the American Army. Allied airpower was forced to operate from muddy and hastily-constructed air strips. There were inadequate supplies of fuel and parts—little protection from the elements. Moreover, food and equipment were difficult to transport, since it was a 560-mile ride from the port of Algiers to Tunis. Despite these hindrances, a steady trickle of troops rolled eastward in an attempt to win the race with the Germans to Tunisia.

* * * *

THE combat teams of the Ninth Infantry Division were operating as separate commands on November 11, 1942. Two teams, however, the 47th and 60th were to return shortly to Division control and participate in the border war of nerves with Spanish Morocco.

With the ending of their short, sharp engagement, French and American units became allies. Simultaneously, German radio propagandists broadcast in Arabic that the *Luftwaffe* would bomb locations where American troops were stationed. This form of psychological warfare was designed to stir dissension amongst the local citizenry. But the Americans were exceedingly careful not to hinder the formation or keeping of any friendship which might have existed between the native population and their new neighbors.

In the area of Safi, where the forces of Military District #5 (47th C.T.) held sway, GIs were given their first rules of conduct in a foreign country . . . and checked as to their proper usage. Specifically, MP's received instructions to keep traffic moving and to see that soldiers *did not*:

> Enter, smoke, sit, loiter or stop in front of mosques; Make noise or stare while Moslems were praying; Drink liquor in front of Moslems; Make fun of the natives; Show disrespect to Moroccans; Wear uniform improperly.

These were but a few of the regulations; many more were to be found on the pages of official guide books. Such pamphlets, nonetheless, did not give several explanations which later were to be found out by personal and actual experience.

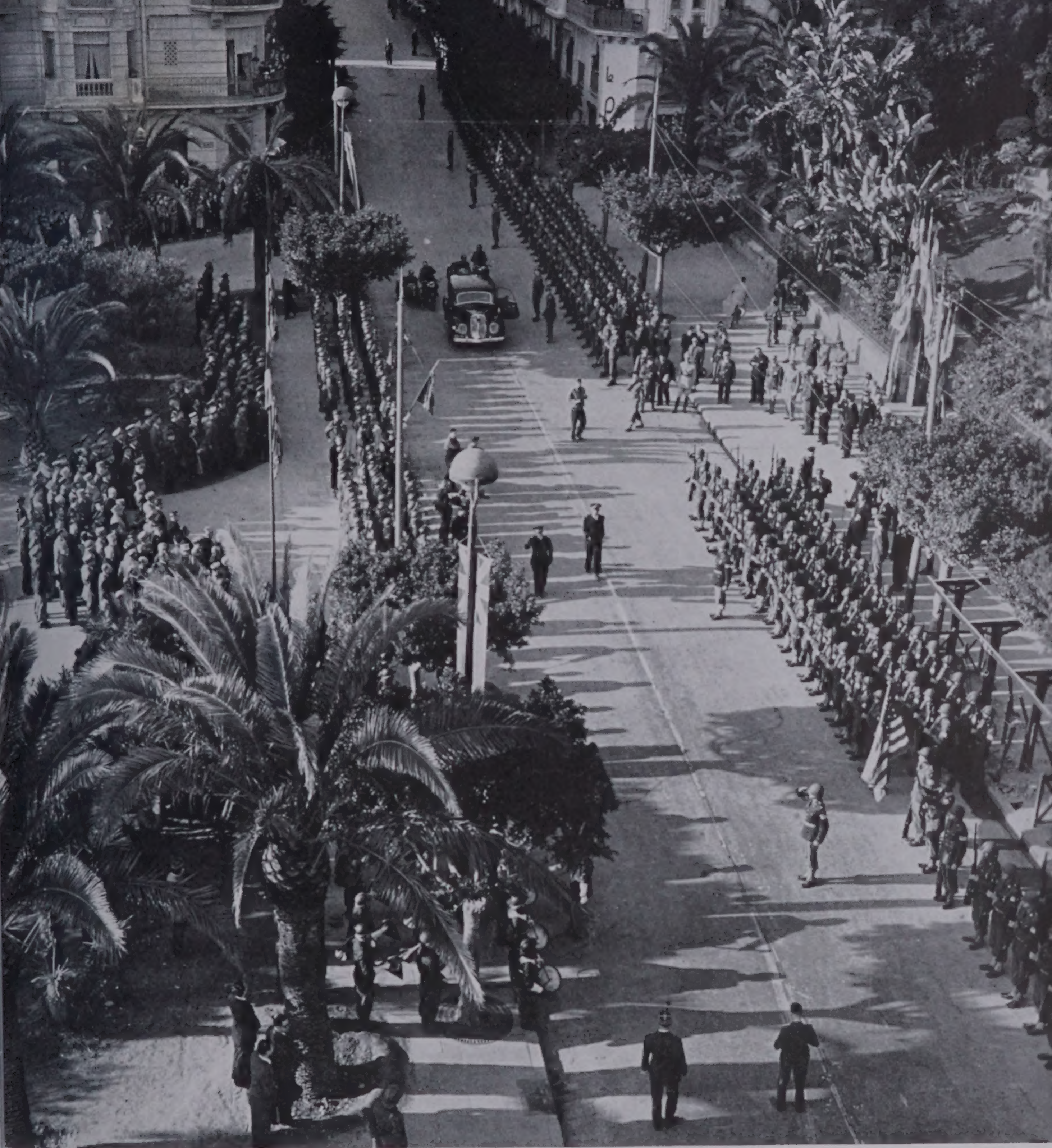
We had been in Safi only three days when, swinging down the street, came an Arab urchin in ragged clothes selling peanuts in tiny containers made of newspaper . . . "Peanuts! Peanuts!" he shouted, "Best Goddam peanuts in Safi!"

—Harold T. O'Hara

During November the 39th C.T. foot-slogged the ten hilly miles from Maison Carree to Algiers and opened its C.P. within that mystic port. Algiers then was the North African Theater Headquarters city, and a center of transportation and supply as well. It was from this area that Company *L* had embarked with a unit of Rangers aboard a destroyer for Bone as the armistice was being signed. And it was from here that the *Falcons* and their attachments were to operate for several months as a separate command, protecting lines of communications and receiving a taste of occupational duties.

The 60th C.T. was located within the confines of the beautiful Mamora Cork Forest at this time, guarding the Spanish border and sipping an occasional glass of *vin rouge* (*vino* to many GIs). This duty and this pleasure were to be shared shortly by the 47th C.T., which had been alerted for movement north by foot from Safi.

For sheer stamina, the foot march which began on December 1st and took the 47th C.T. from Safi via Casablanca to Port Lyautey had few equals. The route was anything but conducive to leisurely hiking and the distance was 238 miles—the longest foot march undertaken by American soldiers in North Africa. Major Gershenow and his 2nd Battalion had been left behind, to take charge of Military District #5. The rest of the combat team proceeded up the Moroccan coast, sweating by day and shivering



CASABLANCA CEREMONY: RAIDERS WALKED SOME MORE by night. Aching feet hit the road pavement to the vocal rhythm of *I Don't Want to Walk Without You Baby,* a popular tune of the day . . . even the motorized 84th Field Artillery walked, as their vehicles transported equipment.

The long journey halted temporarily as the regiment stepped into Casablanca, to enable the 47th to march in a French-American parade. It was the afternoon of December 13, 1942; there were many great names present, and it was important that the Americans make an excellent showing. The crowd was so enthusiastic that police were unable to restrain them. Shouting was not all for the Americans, however, for the French were showing off their famous Tirailleurs Marocains and colorful Spahis.

That day, after the tumult and parading died down, there was a football game between the erstwhile adversaries, with proceeds going to the benefit of wounded Americans and Frenchmen. And, if anyone had been so inclined, he could have glanced through the local newspaper and seen an advertisement asking for men to join the new Corps Franc d'Afrique, later to figure prominently with the Ninth Division in both Northern Tunisia and Sicily.

Completion of this long march heralded the reassembling of the Ninth Infantry Division into one unit, for Division headquarters was on the high seas heading for the port of Casablanca, as were Divarty and the remainder of regimental and attached troops which had been left in the United States.

* * * *

HEADQUARTERS of the 60th Infantry had been moved into the Mamora Cork Forest from Mehdia Beach on December 16th. The 47th joined the *Go-Devils* a few days later, and men of the two regiments swapped experiences. It was learned about this time that the Division commander had arrived in the city of Casablanca with part of his staff, and it was rumored that the balance of Division headquarters and those units which had not participated in the landings were Africa-bound.

These rumors proved to be true, for most of the remaining organizations of the Ninth Infantry Division began docking at Casablanca on Christmas eve, going immediately into a bivouac area about two miles from the city. This landing was followed by an intense enemy air raid—the first on Casablanca.

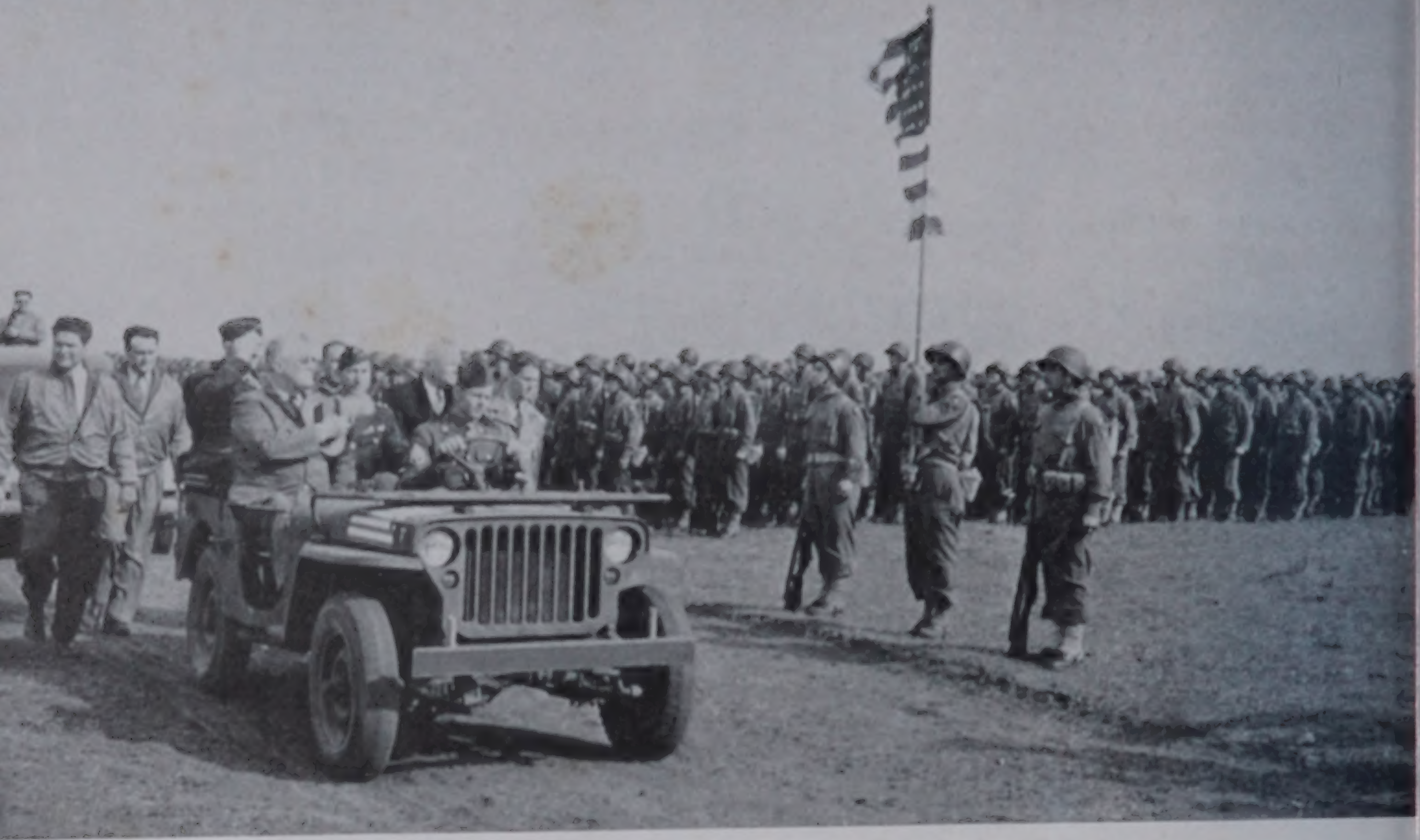
Christmas passed without too much celebration, and the new year of 1943 brought increased responsibility and work for the men of the Ninth. Some of the newly-landed units were shuttled by rail to Port Lyautey, others stayed behind to do stevedore duty at the busy Casablanca docks. Early January found the Ninth together once again—except for the 39th C.T. in Algeria and a few units yet to arrive from America. With this reassembly of the Division came establishment of two working headquarters, one for the Ninth itself and the other for the 1st Military District. General Eddy had command of both. Port Lyautey was an important link in the North African chain of supply, and this factor—added to the constant threat of Spanish intervention—made the commanding general and his staff have military nightmares.

The United States Army was concerned greatly about the 130,000 troops (native and Spanish) still stationed along the border. Francisco Franco had pledged his neutrality, but pro-Axis as he was, the Allies could ill-afford chancing another *Pearl Harbor.* Therefore the 60th and 47th Infantries took up the job of patrolling the Spanish Moroccan frontier, with various battalions rotating on this duty. Franco thus was immobilizing almost a corps (counting divisions to the south) of American troops by his *reputation.*

On January 25, 1943, the remaining units of the Ninth arrived aboard the Swedish Liner "Kungsholm." These organizations had left in December with Division headquarters. However, their first ship the "George W. Goethels" broke down in a storm and was forced to return to Staten Island.

Weeks which followed were a monotonous succession of guard duty, training and reorganization . . . changed only by an occasional pass, a bottle of the local red wine, the very infrequent sight of a European girl, sessions of learning the necessary words in Arabic and French, trading cigarets and money for eggs or *du pain* (bread), reading the daily bulletin, writing letters home and drinking another swig from that swarthy bottle of *vin.*

MARTHA RAYE DROPPED BY ➡



PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT REVIEWS THE NINTH

Cheery-eyed Major Ross Wilson, Special Services Officer, broke the dull air finally with an announcement that real entertainment was coming the way of the Ninth Division. It turned out to be the vibrant Martha Raye, comedienne and singing star of radio and screen. Miss Raye and her troupe had arrived to perform the first of the Division's too infrequent *live shows,* and Martha brought down the house . . . which was seated in the open air of the race track at Port Lyautey.

Air raids were few and far between and, perhaps, it appeared as though the Ninth Infantry Division was being neglected so far as concerned the *fighting war* over in Tunisia. *That* war seemed far off as guard duty continued, supplies rolled on through the port and life went on like the sinister calm before a storm.

Preparations were being made around this time for the visit of a very high-ranking personage. All General Eddy could find out was that the individual was an "Army commander." It seemed rather strange, however, that such great precautions should be taken for an Army general. Then when Secret Service men came to inspect the area the Ninth's commander knew who was coming. It was the President of the United States, about to attend the famed *Casablanca Conference.*

President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill met in the city of Casablanca for one of their historic conferences during January 1943. It was at this time that future plans and strategy regarding the invasion of Sicily, Italy and Western Europe were discussed.

On the 22nd the Commander in Chief and his party arrived at Port Lyautey to visit the Ninth Division. A composite combat team consisting of the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 60th Infantry, the 3rd Battalion of the 47th and a company of the 70th Tank Battalion staged a review at Mehdia for the wartime President, who viewed the proceedings from his jeep. Acting as guard of honor for the Chief Executive was the I. & R. Platoon of the 47th Infantry.

After the parade was over, Mr. Roosevelt and his party were escorted to the Kasba-Mehdia region, where Colonel de Rohan explained the movements of the 60th C.T. during the North African landings. F. D. R. then left the Ninth Division, his famed naval cape flowing in the breeze . . . a smile upon his face. It was the last time most members of the Division would see him again.

* * * *

THE race to Tunisia was won by the Germans. They did it by a narrow margin and against roving bands of Allied resistance. If *Torch* was battle by deception, the scramble for this eastern possession was battle by wits. A strange type of warfare was conducted by the Allies over the wastes and hills of Tunisia's no man's land. Colorful patrols of the French Camel Corps, elements of the British 78th Division, roving patrols of American paratroopers, Rangers, and a skeletonized American II Corps ranged over the massive battlefields, attempting to destroy the enemy before his strength was too great.

If the Allies had launched any sort of full-scale attack they would have been defeated in detail . . . cut apart by superior numbers of the foe. Actually, in the southern part of Tunisia there were but a few hundred Americans and Frenchmen. Their mission was to cover a 100-mile front, racing up and down, striking sharply at the Nazis . . . making them believe that there was an entire division to their front.

With the many seaports and airfields of Tunisia at their command, as well as air supremacy and a growing superiority in effective manpower, the Germans soon held an almost solid line from Cape Serrat south. By January Allied personnel fighting the battle for Tunisia were battered and worn out. For instance, Combat Command *B* of the 1st Armored Division had effected a withdrawal during a severe rain storm and that unit was unable to extricate a major portion of its tanks and artillery from the quagmires of mud. These were hard losses for the lightly equipped Americans. British battalions were operating at one-third strength and bad weather had forced the Allies to go on the defensive in order to build up troops and supplies.

Axis forces had their foothold and a lot more. That was the first phase of the campaign. Now came the second phase, the German offensive.

A majority of Americans have grown up believing that Africa is divided into two portions, the huge desert wastes of *Beau Geste* and *Beau Sabeur* to

CASABLANCA HARBOR WAS BUSY

THE TERRAIN OF NORTH AFRICA SURPRISED MANY

the north and the jungle land of Frank Buck to the south. That is not entirely true. North Africa, for example, is not all sandy desert country. On the contrary, it is more like the western part of the United States or some sections of Old Mexico.

A glance at a map of Tunisia, followed by a study of German plans reveals that Von Arnim had evolved his strategy so as to parallel closely the peculiar nature of Africa's variant terrain.

Tunisia is a land which can be divided into two main sections, each with its own variety of climate and topography. To the north there is the great Tunis Plain, protected and surrounded by a rugged mass of mountains (djebels) and hills to the south and west—as if it were an African *Shangri La.* This ring of djebels forms a barrier which can be held against attack by a few well-fortified defenders, since there are relatively few passes—and these are narrow. The mass joins a range of hills (which rings Bizerte) to the north of Tunis.

Part of the plain is the port city of Tunis, well-equipped, modern and easily accessible to Sicily, Sardinia and the Mediterranean coast. This expanse enters into another coastal plain to the south at the gateway towns of Zaghouan, Pont du Fahs and Enfidaville. Running south of Pont du Fahs is the rugged Tunisian eastern dorsal (high mountain range), a group of towering peaks which reach southward for about 150 miles and pivot at Maknassy. From Maknassy the range rolls to the southwest for a final 50 miles. Just 20 miles south of El Guettar the dorsal ends. But here it connects with another barrier, the salt lakes (chotts) . . . great, impassable bodies of salt, slime and dust. These stretch eastward toward the port of Gabes.

Within the Grande Dorsale Range and chott regions lies the great mesa which begins at Zaghouan and Pont du Fahs. The area is 180 miles long, ending just south of Gabes at a town called Mareth. Since the dorsal has only four main passes to the west, Fondouk, Faid, Maknassy and El Guettar, and is bordered by the chotts to the south, the plain is a naturally protected fortress. The 20-mile-wide lane through Mareth and Gabes then held the key to the south and the canyon-like passes were the gateways in the west. Since the region could be well supplied from the sea, it presented Von Arnim with an excellent foothold on the continent of Africa.

Beyond the eastern ring of passes lay a secondary group to the west . . . Kasserine, Thala, Sbiba and Dernia. These could form an outer ring of defense for the Germans and aid in their harassing any invasion of Tunisia from Algeria.

The enemy plan was to have Rommel and Von Arnim join forces within the great plains fortress. Djebels, dorsals, chotts and hills would form the protective wall . . . the passes and defiles would be well-fortified and mined. Axis patrols would attack into the outer ring as soon as possible, and a strong line would be formed around Mareth, to plug the southern gap.

At that time of year rain and cold were on the side of the Germans. Tunisia has few roads and these are narrow—with soft shoulders and bumpy surfaces. Such conditions made GI trucks and artillery pieces leave the roads or sink into quagmires of Tunisian mud. Highways which were paved with hard dirt cracked during dry weather and turned into a sea of sticky clay during the rains. Moreover, these roads often could be rendered unusable by mines, blocking passage for miles around. For the winter months, passes and defiles were to play an all-important role in the Allied conquest of Southern Tunisia . . . since they could be defended by a minimum of men against an army.

* * * *

FIRST of the Ninth Division's combat teams to have any of its units participate in the fight against German troops was the 39th C.T., which had been left at Algiers and then ordered spread throughout the length and breadth of the Algerian province. During December 1942, Cannon Company had been attached to the ill-fated Combat Command *B* of the 1st Armored Division and joined that command on the Tunisian front.

Late January found the 39th's 2nd Battalion moving over the treacherous and narrow Atlas Mountain roads from Bermandres and occupying the towns of Palestro, Menerville, Rouiba, Souk el Haad, Thiers and Bouira. This was all part of the combat team mission which, after its assignment to the British First Army, was to guard the Allied lines of communications from Algiers to Tunisia—a most important task which had been assigned by Allied Force Headquarters.

On February 1st the Anti-Tank Company of the *Falcon* regiment made a 266-mile motor jaunt in cold, windy weather to guard the airport and communications in the vicinity of Biskra . . . they soon would see action. Also would the 3rd Battalion, which had moved to the vicinity of Souk Ahras. With its 1st Battalion at Bougie, the 39th now encompassed an area of over 300 miles.

Days of guarding the Moroccan border and drinking *vin rouge* by the sea were to end for the Division units at Port Lyautey. They shortly were to reenter combat and began by heading eastward. The journey to Tunisia was accomplished in several commonplace—even monotonous—stages . . . but the positions of the Ninth during February were to affect greatly the strategy of defeating a rampaging Rommel.

At the end of January the 60th Infantry displaced toward Tlemcen, Algeria. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions did not stop long, however, and continued on toward Oran—for guard duty until February 18th. Regimental headquarters and the 1st Battalion rolled into an olive grove between Montagnac and Layayssiere, Algeria, where they set up bivouac and kept watchful eyes on a nearby airport.

Secret instructions fetched the 2nd Battalion, 47th Infantry, to Port Lyautey from Safi at the beginning of February. With this reattachment the *Raiders* headed for Oran via Tlemcen, where orders were received to shuttle the regiment to Tunisia. The 47th arrived at its temporary home near Asis Ben Okba (eight miles from Oran) on the 12th after completing a 482-mile journey from Port Lyautey in uncomfortable *40 and 8's.* Thirty or more men and their accompanying barracks bags had been jammed into each freight car with little room left to sleep properly . . . and the rail convoy's slow speed exaggerated the already distasteful conditions. There followed a shuttle movement east and finally the regiment was motorized with 100 trucks.

Division headquarters completed its movement to Tlemcen by the 12th, following Divarty whose General Irwin had acted as Division commander until this headquarters arrived. From Tlemcen the Ninth would jump off to Tunisia, and from this quiet location one of the greatest artillery marches in history would begin.

* * * *

MEANWHILE, a storm was brewing in the east. Rommel had linked up with enemy forces to the north commanded by General Jurgin von Arnim, Germany's greatest *Panzer* expert. The German-Italian effort now was ready, and Rommel decided to strike telling blows before the Allies could bring strength to bear in force. Southward the Mareth line was being formed; to the north the front was stable; in the weakened center the picture was different. Here small units of Americans, French and British held the passes . . . and tanks and artillery were worth their weight in gold.

French positions were hit the hardest when the enemy offensive rolled into high gear. Poorly equipped and lacking armor, the French were unable to halt a breakthrough at Faid Pass and fell back on Sidi bou Zid. The situation was dangerous and the 1st Armored Division dispatched units to assist in holding the area.

By this time the British Eighth Army had captured the port of Tripoli, following a spectacular 1,400-mile-drive which had strained supply lines and supporting arms to capacity. The *Desert Rats* were forced to stop, replenish, rebuild and reorganize. Their halt stretched to eight weeks, which allowed Rommel time to concentrate his support with Von Arnim rather than to man fully the Mareth line.

While Montgomery was building his forces for a knockout punch at Mareth, Rommel and Von Arnim pooled 200,000 desert veterans, all the Axis armor, artillery and air support and set the day. Weather was in their favor. They decided to launch a sweeping lunge, break out of the last ring of mountain passes, chop up the compararatively weak American II Corps (along the central front) in detail, then flank the entire Allied Tunisian line—thus compelling the Anglo-American forces to withdraw into Algeria. The hour was dark for those units which stood in Rommel's way.

The enemy struck during the early hours of February 14, 1943. He hit with armor, motorized infantry, artillery, *Stukas* (those dive-bombing hell-planes which wracked the nerves of green troops), fighter planes and success. Through Faid Pass and toward Kasserine rolled the *Afrika Korps* . . . Rommel was launching a three-column drive to the center and an armored attack slightly south.

There are many versions of the battle for Kasserine Pass. All accounts, if truthful, must admit one fact: the Axis defeated the Allies for the first six days . . . almost outflanked the Allied line. Rommel was stopped dramatically at Thala by a small composite British force and the Ninth Division Artillery, fortunately; for otherwise he would have had a clear field to the rear of the British First Army to the north. A few engineers, a Ranger battalion and some tankers of the 1st Armored Division performed a similar feat before Tebessa.

Rommel's main drive, as stated previously, was three-pronged. One column attacked along the Faid-Sbeitla Road and another the town of Sidi bou Zid and the Faid Road, cutting off the 34th Division's 168th C.T. (which had made the Algerian landing with the 39th C.T.). The third and largest column enveloped the left flank of the 168th, threatening the regiment with encirclement. An armored battalion was rushed to aid the hard hit combat team, but this rescuing force ran into a tank ambuscade and was forced to limp off a poor second. Although the 1st Armored attacked on the following day to relieve the 168th, relief was impossible . . . the 168th C.T. was left to its fate . . . Sidi bou Zid and the regiment were overrun. Among the units lost at Sidi bou Zid was the 39th Infantry's Cannon Company, which had been attached to the armored relief force.

More tanks were lost by the out-numbered 1st Armored as the day wore on, and the badly-mauled Americans fell back toward Sbeitla and Kasserine. *Panzer* forces attacked Gafsa and, since this position was held only lightly, it fell. Feriana and Thelepte, the two fighter plane bases, were quickly enveloped and soon lost—as the Allied line hurriedly was changed to conform with these withdrawals.

The objective of the enemy appeared to be Tebessa, Algeria, for his greatest pressure was directed against the pass of Kasserine. Diversionary attacks were launched to the north and south of the pass by the Germans in order to stop the Kasserine area from being reinforced. Then the Axis attack got up steam. The 1st Armored withdrew along the Sbeitla-Kasserine Road, covered by Combat Command *B* which had rushed in from Maktar. Part of this covering force was the 3rd Battalion and the Anti-Tank Company of the 39th Infantry, about to engage in their first recorded large-scale action against the Germans in World War II.

It was at Kasserine Pass that the 3rd Battalion and Anti-Tank Company were hit by an overwhelming force—including two *Panzer* divisions. Rommel had made a smashing drive into the pass on the 19th. Having infiltrated past the American forces and punched through with tanks, artillery and planes the Germans pressed their advantage the following day. It was an unequal battle . . . watching from their positions above the valley, infantrymen could see the gigantic tank struggle and the inevitable result . . . one combat command against approximately two divisions!

Axis forces overran all positions; they poured into the valley and up the roads. The 3rd Battalion was overrun completely; the Anti-Tank Company had few casualties but lost all of its guns. Both outfits were routed and infiltrated back to Souk Ahras—Americans had attempted to hold at all costs and failed. (Combat Command *B* was able to extricate a portion of its men and equipment and later made a gallant and successful stand before Tebessa).

It was now clear that Rommel's entire thrust (which already had covered fifty miles!) was directed against Tebessa—supply base and air center of the Allied Tunisian command—and toward Thala to the north. At first the powerful Axis drive smashed up the road toward Thala, the entrance through which Rommel planned to drive a huge concentration of armor and flank the Allied Line. This was the area, too, through which he hoped to flank Tebessa. If the *wily desert fox* could get by Thala he would have the Allies where he wanted them.

There did not seem to be anything to stop the Germans except a few hastily dispatched British tanks, infantry and artillery . . . the kind of outfit Kipling would have sent to conquer a native village of India . . . a small task force . . . rushed to meet the strength of the whole attack. The British were waiting for the Germans on a ridge just beyond Kasserine Pass on the road to Thala. It was a suicidal mission and the *Tommies* must have known it . . . but this group sacrificed itself and temporarily stopped the enemy. Although most of the rear guard and its tanks were wiped out, these gallant soldiers had delayed Rommel's advance . . . for one day.

A portion of the British 26th Armoured Regiment now moved forward into Thala, its light tanks no match for the Axis armor. With this group came a few more infantrymen—to establish a line about three miles south of the town. On the night of February 20th the entire Allied situation was glum. Only massed heavy artillery or overwhelming tank superiority could halt the enemy combination and no such help was in sight.

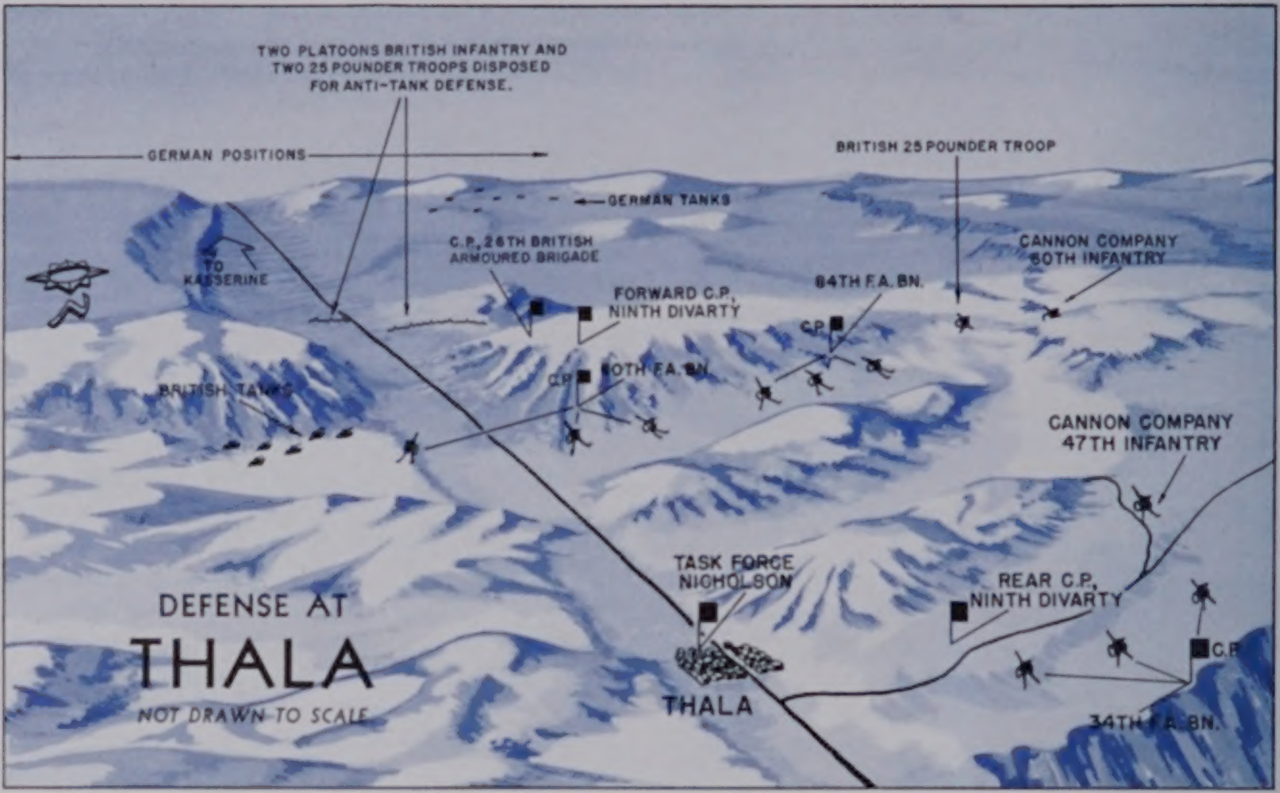
But aid was coming . . . it was aid which even Rommel could not foresee!

* * * *

TLEMCEN lies southwest of Oran and is about 800 miles distant from the passes of Faid and Kasserine . . . 800 miles of winding, narrow, congested, slippery and precipitous mountain roads. With winter's rains and frost, travel to the front from Tlemcen could have taken as much as two or three weeks.

On February 14th the Ninth Division Artillery (less the 26th and 84th F.A. Bns.) was preparing to hold maneuvers in the desert south of Tlemcen. Battalion commanders were on reconnaissance, and the following day was to have seen the opening of a school for French officers.

At about 10:30 on Wednesday morning, February 17th, orders were received at Division headquarters to dispatch—without delay—all available artillery


TWO PLATOONS BRITISH INFANTRY AND TWO 25 POUNDER TROOPS DISPOSED FOR ANTI-TANK DEFENSE.
GERMAN POSITIONS
BRITISH 25 POUNDER TROOP
GERMAN TANKS
TO KASSERINE
C.P., 26TH BRITISH ARMOURED BRIGADE
FORWARD C.P., NINTH DIVARTY
84TH F.A. BN.
CANNON COMPANY 60TH INFANTRY
C.P.
C.P.
60TH F.A. BN.
BRITISH TANKS
CANNON COMPANY 47TH INFANTRY
TASK FORCE NICHOLSON
REAR C.P., NINTH DIVARTY
DEFENSE AT
THALA
NOT DRAWN TO SCALE
THALA
C.P.
34TH F.A. BN.

and cannon by forced march to the vicinity of Tebessa, on the Tunisian-Algerian border. The artillery and cannon companies at Tlemcen were given a three-hour alert. Brigadier General S. LeRoy Irwin, the Divarty commander, was to lead the expedition.

At 4 P.M. the caravan was rolling out of the eastern edge of Tlemcen. Snow lay upon the ground and rain beat a muffled patter upon vehicles and weapons. Leading, was the 34th Field Artillery followed by the 60th Field, the 60th Cannon Company and Headquarters Battery of Divarty. They would pick up the 84th Field Artillery and the 47th Cannon Company near L'Arba. (These units had been proceeding leisurely toward Algiers as part of the 47th Combat Team when they received the alert.)

With little sleep, and stopping only for food, fuel and an occasional forty winks, the column began a 777-mile march along slippery mountain curves. The trucks and their bouncing tow of lethal weapons roared on . . . on through Sidi bel Abbes (Foreign Legion Hqs.), Orleansville, Affreville, Blida ("here comes the 84th"), L'Arba, Setif, Ain-M'lila and into Ain Beida.

On the morning of February 21st the column was halted by British Traffic Control at Ain Beida . . . and a mass of rumors began hitting the ears of the column's troops. Those rumors reported Tebessa likely to fall at any moment . . . and there was a steady stream of air force personnel, supplies and service units going to the rear. Tebessa was an important supply and aviation center; it was being evacuated . . . and the road was crowded with this retrograde movement.

At noon the orders were *ON THROUGH TEBESSA!* A few hours later the column of artillery and cannon was rolling through the town of Tebessa, dodging traffic, to get into Thala. Ambulances, supply trains, troops and everything imaginable clogged the narrow roads . . . and here, once more, the column was informed of the hopelessness of its task . . . and told to "get while the getting was good" by men who were returning from the front.

> *The road to Thala was maddening. It was winding, narrow, slippery, and jammed with traffic of all kinds, through which . . . drivers had literally to fight their way . . . It was learned later what General Irwin's orders had been. He was to command a mixed group of British and American Artillery in supporting 'some elements of the British 26th Rifle Brigade' in holding the Thala defile "at all costs!"*
>
> —*Combat Report (60th F.A. Bn.)*

Through snow and rain and over treacherous mountain roads, the column had made its way . . . and now it came to a halt . . . at Thala. Divarty and its cannon company attachments had arrived in the nick of time—on the night of February 21st. It was an amazing march the column had completed . . . it was unbelievable that 2,170 men and officers plus their 411 vehicles had navigated this 777-mile journey in less than 100 hours. Icy and precipitous roads had caused weapons of some batteries to slide off the steep mountain heights. But these losses and the soft-shoulders of mud and the rivers of rain had failed to halt General Irwin's task force . . . and now they were in position . . . after having completed one of the greatest artillery marches in military history. The artillerymen and cannoneers of the Ninth were about to stop Rommel!

With amazing dexterity the artillery battalions rolled into position during the closing hours of February 21st and awaited the *Panzer* cyclone which was due to come from the direction of Kasserine. To their front was but a handful of British infantry . . . said to be three platoons, but about the equivalent of one American platoon. The story goes that these weary souls kept running up and down their line of positions, firing and making the enemy believe that there was much more opposition than existed actually.

The Axis armored spearhead had nearly three battalions of infantry against the three threadbare platoons of His Majesty's Lestershire Yeomanry. About 40 powerful tanks opposed the 24 British *Mark IV's*, which were too small to give battle and so were kept in reserve. Only in artillery were the two sides equal, and that the result of the arrival of the Ninth's reinforcements.

Days and nights of steady and miserable rainfall were now at an end and the dull, cloudy morning of February 22, 1943, yawned awake. The Germans opened a tremendous tank attack up the Thala defile at 7 A.M., aided by artillery and dive-bombers. At this time the Americans and British were only three miles south of Thala, perched upon the last defenses before that town. The enemy was but 2,500 yards distant, making it necessary to fire at almost point-blank range. As a matter of fact, British artillery, defiladed on the forward slopes, actually did lower its

Distinguished Unit Citation

. . . *9th Infantry Division Artillery*, is cited for conspicuous gallantry and heroism in battle on 21, 22, and 23 February 1943, in repelling an attack by vastly superior forces, which were attempting to break through the Allied lines in the vicinity of Thala, Tunisia . . . *9th Infantry Division Artillery*, completed a 100-hour forced march from Tlemcen, Algeria, covering a distance of 735 miles in bitter weather over tortuous and almost impassable mountain roads on the night of 21 February 1943. Without prior reconnaissance or adequate maps, harassed by enemy fire, and forced to maneuver through a congested narrow road, nevertheless . . . occupied battle positions, set up communications, established observation posts, and was ready to deliver fire by daylight. Although enemy forces were entrenched only 2,500 yards distant and there were only three platoons of friendly infantry in front of the artillery, the unit maintained constant and steady fire with such deadly effect that enemy tank units were dispersed and driven back. The cool and determined manner in which . . . *9th Division Artillery* entered into battle, after an almost incredible forced march contributed in great measure to the defeat of the enemy's attempt to break through the Thala defile. The gallant entry into battle and the heroism with which the volume of fire was maintained, despite terrific enemy fire, are in keeping with the highest traditions of the American military service.

(Note: This is a consolidated citation of the awards given *Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, Ninth Division Artillery; 34th, 60th and 84th Field Artillery Battalions* and the *47th and 60th Cannon Companies.—The Author)* muzzles and fire what amounted to flat-trajectory fire. Guns of the 84th Field Artillery did the same.

For three hours past dawn the battle raged. German *Stukas* attempted to silence the Ninth Divarty's guns but could not. Battery *C*, 84th F.A., was dispatched forward to an anti-tank position as the enemy approached. Its 105's were lowered and fired point-blank at oncoming tanks to stop the armored threat. Two guns were hit badly but the battery continued to fire, accomplishing its mission.

Rommel's forces tried to break through to Thala all day. But the combined efforts of Rommel, Goering, Mussolini, Himmler or even Hitler himself behind the enemy soldiers could not have aided the Germans and Italians. The enemy simply could not advance against the rapidly-firing artillerymen, who sought out *Panzer* tanks with 105 and 155 shells for a most devastating and memorable effect.

The drive out of Kasserine Pass was halted. It was halted by the artillery, cannon and gumption of the force that "couldn't arrive in time" . . . but did!

Taking advantage of the enemy's stunning defeat, infantry and aircraft launched a counterattack from the area southwest of Thala. Battered Combat Command *B* readied itself for retaliation and struck. Rommel went into headlong retreat. The *B-17's* bombed his columns . . . and back through Kasserine hobbled the remnants of his once-proud 21st *Panzer* Division . . . and his last chance in the west. On the 24th, CC*B* was reported within one mile of Kasserine . . . and Nazi vehicles were fairly rolling over each other in an effort to leave the pass.

On February 25th, while Italians and *Teller* mines covered their withdrawal, the Germans fled to the east and succeeded in disengaging from their American pursuers. All that remained of the Axis' erstwhile fifty-mile gain was control of Gafsa.

In men and equipment, both sides had suffered staggering losses. During two days alone the 1st Armored Division lost 100 tanks, and at least 2,000 Americans of all organizations were prisoners of the Axis. Rommel, on the other hand, lost a large portion of his armor, and more important, the initiative in the west.

For the Ninth Infantry Division, this battle meant the virtual elimination of an infantry battalion and two supporting companies of the 39th Infantry. However, the gallant stand of Divarty and its cannon company support overshadowed any losses which the Division might have had. Never before in the history of modern warfare had artillery alone stopped the combined assaults of tanks, motorized infantry, dive-bombers—and dueled enemy artillery as well!

* * * *

TWO days after the Ninth Division Artillery and cannon companies left Tlemcen, the balance of the Ninth pulled up its well-worn stakes and hastened to the Tunisian front. As the Division pulled into the border town of Bou Chebka, however, Rommel's unsuccessful *Panzers* were withdrawing east beyond Kasserine. All that remained for the Ninth Division was a vast litter-strewn battleground . . . grim reminder of what had transpired.

Yet despite indications of a passive sector, the lengthy front was likely to explode again, and strong precautionary measures were taken. The 1st Infantry Division, which was relieved by the Ninth, had been holding Kasserine Pass with its 16th C.T. Upon arrival of the Ninth Division, this regiment was attached to the Ninth and remained in place while a defensive line was established. At El ma el Abiod Pass, near the Tunisian-Algerian border, the 47th C.T. dug in, having the mission of holding that natural gateway *at all costs*. Concurrently, the 60th C.T. opened for business at Bou Chebka, using first the border customs house and later a nearby farmhouse as its C.P.

For the next few weeks, life consisted of holding what had been regained. The air generally was peaceful—punctured only by an occasional gunshot or bursting aerial bomb. Then, during the early days of March, another change of positions occurred. The *Raiders*—followed by the big guns of the 34th Field Artillery—made an epic displacement to the left, shuttling by truck at night from the extreme right of the extended front to the extreme left, in what amounted to a forced march, and replaced the

16th C.T. at Kasserine by daylight. Thelepte and Feriana airports were hosts to a steady stream of *Go-Devils,* who moved in to guard those vital landing strips. And the 39th C.T. completed a 396-mile journey through the treacherous Atlas Mountains to rejoin the Ninth at Bou Chebka. Most of the Division's detachments now had returned to the *fold,* as well as a new attachment, the 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

Covering a 52-mile front extended greatly the Ninth Division's lines of communications. Without the distinguished service performed by the Ninth Signal Company and the Ninth Reconnaissance Troop, such a lengthy line of defense would have suffered serious gaps. But these two units were equal to a difficult task. Signalmen covered an area which normally would require ten times the available personnel and equipment. Recon troopers patrolled this enormous sector along the front and as far south as Gafsa, where they kept contact with a cagey enemy and displayed both thoroughness and speed.

It was early in March that General Patton assumed command of the II Corps. A different type of strategy was quickly evident . . . the use of infantry to open a path through which armor could race. At this time the American forces in Tunisia consisted of the 34th Infantry Division—which was aiding the British to the north—with the Ninth and 1st Infantry Divisions, the 1st Armored Division and special units to the south.

On St. Patrick's Day the 1st Infantry Division captured Gafsa, while the 1st Armored by-passed that town and pushed slowly toward Sened. This movement was part of a master plan for the Allies in North Africa and began on March 16th with a II Corps drive. Montgomery by now had strong forces opposing the Axis on the Mareth Line, where he was ready to signal his next huge offensive.

* * * *

THE Allied plan of action has been compared to the operation of a piston. If we consider the protectorate of Tunisia as such a mechanical device it helps to clarify the strategy. Capping the piston was the Mediterranean; the right wall was the coast from Bizerte southward. To the west were the British First Army (on the north) and the American II Corps (on the south), forming the left wall and attacking as necessary to maintain their holding power. At the bottom were Montgomery's *Desert Rats*—acting as the piston arm. They were to push the *Afrika Korps* steadily north while the remainder of the Allied forces occupied the enemy along the west wall.

Naturally the piston had a *spark.* This turned out to be the II Corps, displacing north and making its final drive on Mateur and Bizerte. In effect, the Axis was to be exploded out of North Africa. But the action of the *spark* would come later; first it was necessary to push the enemy north.

While the British drove up the coast, it was to be the task of the Americans to engage every bit of Axis armor and infantry as far as possible. Such a diversionary attack would focus a great deal of attention upon the enemy's western front and serve to tie up a large number of tanks with which Rommel could oppose the Eighth Army to the south.

The mission of the II Corps included securing Maknassy during the coordinated attack, then breaking the battle-tested 1st Armored through El Guettar Pass. If the tankers could enter the great coastal plains region there seemed an excellent chance that the Americans might cut off the rear of the enemy.

Part of the Axis strategy was to use the natural fortress formed by the Grande Dorsale Range and the sea, where reinforcements and supplies could be rushed across the coastal plateau to block any threatened point. But this advantage was turning into a dilemma for the enemy. If Rommel were forced to retreat, Von Arnim and his troops facing the Americans would be faced with destruction; if El Guettar or Maknassy passes were opened, Rommel would have to retreat or be cut off from the rear.

* * * *

AS the drive continued, El Guettar—a mountain pass village along the Gafsa-Gabes road—was captured by the 1st Infantry Division. Its former occupants were rapidly fleeing Italians who left nothing behind. Greater resistance was encountered to the north, on the other hand, where the veteran 21st *Panzer* Division obstructed the path of the 1st Armored from Gafsa to Maknassy and its pass. Thus began the *Twenty Days of Maknassy,* a tale of infantry and armor.

During mid-March, the 60th C.T. had been motorized fully, temporarily detached from the Ninth Division and dispatched to aid the 1st Armored advance. March 18th found the 60th at Zannouch Station, about to enter its first action against the Axis. Less than two days later the *Go-Devils* were rolling cross-country—objective Djebel Goussa. This hill mass dominated the rail line which ran to the sea and was near Station de Sened—"The place everybody fought for and nobody wanted."

The 60th launched its opening attack at night and was singularly successful. Although Axis positions were well-entrenched and well-fortified on Goussa, the combat team was able to maneuver onto the high ground to the enemy's rear. *Go-Devil* flanking reaped a rich harvest, for the djebel fell, and the outwitted defenders retreated from the valley south of the objective. Colonel de Rohan's men had won their first contest with the Axis.

Bombing and strafing by German planes demonstrated, nonetheless, that the foe still was full of fight. And while part of his belligerency was brushed aside late on the evening of the 20th when the 1st Armored ground into Station de Sened, the tankers did not turn south. Six miles in that direction lay Sened. The town was held by the enemy, and he had a small arsenal of artillery emplaced there which kept up a steady tempo of shellfire upon troop movements over the Gafsa-Station de Sened road, causing a great deal of annoyance.

With one successful fight under its belt, the 60th moved during the night of March 21st to the open ground southeast of Djebel Goussa . . . about 1 mile north of the station. Here the regiment was split into three groups. Its 3rd Battalion was detached from the regiment and attached to Combat Command *C,* while the remainder of the team motored from the station to an assembly area four miles west of Maknassy—all except Company *G,* that is, which was left at Station de Sened for policing.

The 3rd Battalion began an attack on March 21st which continued several days. Just before midnight the unit jumped off toward Djebel Naemia—a mountain mass about 5½ miles east of Maknassy. For the most part, Naemia's well-protected defenders were Germans supported by excellent artillery of many calibers—including 210mm field guns. American troops were outnumbered and outpositioned—unable to take the strongpoint. Chattering machine guns and burping mortars covered every crack and draw . . . an almost certain *purple heart* for invaders.

Company "G" at Station de Sened

As the 60th moved toward Maknassy on March 22, 1943, it left behind Company *G* under Captain Willard H. Barnwell. The mission of this unit was to *police* the area around Station de Sened. Enemy artillery was causing a great deal of disturbance from the direction of Sened, however, and Company *G* decided to do something about it.

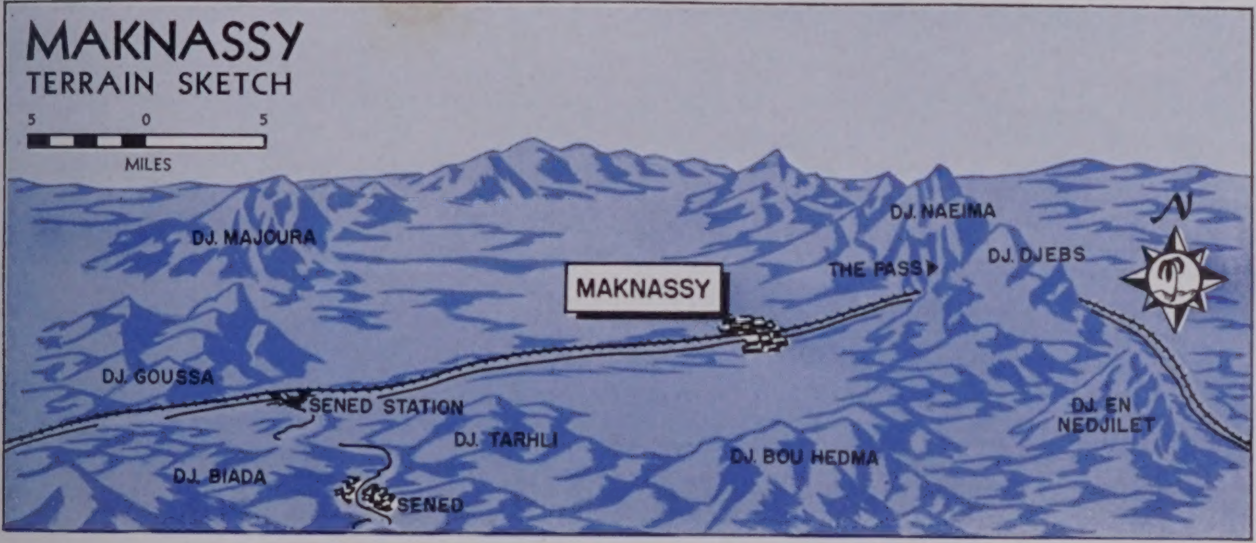
A company has only about 200 men under normal conditions and *G* was low in strength . . . but that did not stop these infantrymen. Captain Barnwell, accompanied by *the one man army of Tunisia,* a colorful character of the outfit . . . one Private *Molotov* (Karl Warner), delivered an ultimatum to the enemy garrison at Sened: *Surrender or be wiped out!*

The enemy ignored this demand so the doughboys with artillery support from the 1st Armored, attacked Sened. It was a bold move and the garrison gave up . . . 542 Italians surrendered. Among the booty captured were armored cars, field artillery pieces, vehicles, and all sorts of weapons and supplies.

By audacity and quick action Company *G* had killed or captured nearly a battalion of the enemy and its supporting arms. With the hills around Sened cleared, the happy group of Americans rejoined their battalion, moving via trucks, to Maknassy. They arrived on March 24th and immediately were placed in action . . . since their *policing* was finished!

Things seemed to go wrong for the 3rd Battalion from the very beginning, when Companies *K* (Captain Robert H. Rucker) and *L* (Captain Robert S. DeGurse) hit land mines and booby traps in the attack. Further advance was not feasible and their positions were dangerous, especially since machine-gun fire was falling upon the attackers from the south slope of their objective.

Captain Rucker was wounded severely by an anti-personnel mine while leading his company and Lt. McFayden (a medic), Major Dilley and two aid men were guided by Private Byrd in an attempt at finding Rucker and giving him aid. As luck would have it, the group ran into an enemy patrol and Byrd fired upon the latter with his sub-machine gun, an action which alerted Axis forces along the entire front. A shower of fire sprayed down upon the battalion from all parts of the hills, surprising the would-be surprisers and causing them to scatter. Quick-thinking Major Dilley was able to get a line of riflemen established upon the djebel and Company *M* (Captain Gail H. Brown) brought up its machine guns and dug in. But from then on it was rough going. Even the tanks of the 1st Armored were of no assistance in taking the hill positions.



Troops attacking Maknassy were more fortunate as that town was captured on the 22nd. Then Djebel Bou Dousou and the ranges beyond fell to the advancing infantrymen of the *Go-Devil* regiment. Nevertheless, the 1st Armored could not penetrate the stubborn defenses of Maknassy Pass. After March 24th, the 60th commenced guarding this pass which led from Maknassy, through the mountains and to the east . . . encouncountering but scant opposition along the outposts, yet unable to capture the pass itself.

Gradually the battle at Maknassy evolved itself into holding what had been gained and driving against the pass. The line extended generally north to south—from Djebel Naemia to Djebel Bou Dousou. Actions encountered between March 28th and April 8th consisted of local attacks by both the Americans and their adversaries, since the enemy was well-entrenched and wanted to stay that way. Despite that condition Axis forces suffered severe losses in both men and materiel during that time . . . losses they could ill afford. Recruits for the fight *against* Hitlerism, on the other hand, began arriving on April 2nd and 3rd when 247 replacements joined the 60th. They were new . . . crisp . . . fresh-looking . . . and very welcome.

By now the main effort of the II Corps was under way at El Guettar—all other American efforts were secondary, although important. The British were pushing the piston arm up from the south and Von Arnim was giving thought to retreating. One favorite trick of the enemy was to stage a false attack to cover his withdrawal. During the night of April 4-5 the Axis tried to break through the 1st Battalion and was thrown back with heavy losses. True to their pattern, the defenders began departing the following day. Not long afterward outposts of the 60th were able to watch the British Eighth making contact with units of the 1st Armored beyond Maknassy Pass.

When the Axis completed its withdrawal from Djebels Dribica and Naemia on the night of April 8th, 1st Armored tanks left the sector and entered into a chase while the 60th C.T. remained to organize the high ground east of Maknassy. Early on the afternoon of the 9th, the *Go-Devils* moved onto the former Axis djebel strongholds, remaining in the vicinity until they rejoined the Ninth Division at Bou Chebka on April 13th. At that time the Ninth's other units had an equally exciting story to swap with the *Go-Devils* . . . the saga of El Guettar.

* * * *

AS BATTLES go, El Guettar was not the biggest, but it was one of the toughest operations in the Ninth's long history. While many consider this the first time the Division operated as a unit in combat, it is only partly true, since the 60th C.T. was fighting the battle of Maknassy many miles away and the Ninth had to perform a divisional job with only six—and for several days five—infantry battalions. Yet El Guettar and the simultaneous clash at Maknassy provided the three combat teams of the Ninth with their first opportunities to fight as entities against the Axis. Of greater importance, these brief encounters taught the Ninth Infantry Division more about combat than could be learned from a library of books.

El Guettar Pass might be considered as a valve in that gigantic Tunisian piston mentioned previously. So long as the Allies kept the left piston wall in place and tricked German armor and infantry over to this opening, the compression stroke of the Eighth Army stood a much better chance of success.

There were many difficulties connected with engaging the enemy at El Guettar. First of all it had been planned originally that the Ninth would attack far to the north. When revised orders were received, most of General Eddy's staff was on advance party reconnaissance many miles from this new objective. To complicate matters further, only two days' notice was furnished the Division of its impending attack. As the campaign progressed, it seemed as if every conceivable obstacle had fallen into the path of the Ninth Division. The Division commander was injured in a serious auto mishap and, with one hand crushed and both legs injured, had to hobble about on crutches during the entire ten-day battle. Five of the six infantry battalion commanders became casualties during the fight as well. Furthermore, both air superiority and the best terrain were in the possession of the enemy and he made superb use of his advantage. One soldier, a combat veteran of two wars, describes the action well, "It was hellish . . . they were looking down at our throats all the time . . . worst I was ever in!"

The map situation was almost hopeless. Accurate prints were unobtainable and American forces had to rely upon blurred copies of antiquated French originals. Hills of less than 200 meters were not shown, and each two miles of ground covered only about five-eighths of an inch on paper . . . hardly enough room for a *dime!* Thus the Division operated under severe handicap regarding location and direction. Regiments found these maps practically useless and companies had little to guide their attacks.

It follows that, when maps are faulty, intelligence sources also are likely to be inaccurate. These passes of the Grande Dorsale Range were masterfully prepared for defense by the enemy; he had spent months digging into the rocky alpine tracts. And, as stated previously, a small group of well-fortified individuals could hold almost any Tunisian pass against an army. But appearances indicated that the pass of El Guettar was held lightly . . . and that was the intelligence report sent the Ninth Division.

* * * *

EL GUETTAR Pass (sometimes called Guetaria) begins about ten to thirteen miles southeast of the village of El Guettar. A fairly good highway, the Gafsa-Gabes road, runs through the pass and is the main motor route of the area. To the south of Guetaria rises a mountainous wall, the outstanding part of which is Djebel Berda. On the north side of the canyon are other djebels, most important of which is Djebel Chemsi—at that time in the 1st Infantry Division zone. Between the pass and the village stretches a flat desert plain, *sans* vegetation and pitted with wadis (dried stream beds). Combat conditions necessitated approaching the pass under cover of darkness—because of the featureless waste-

THE VILLAGE OF EL GUETTAR

land which could be viewed for miles by the enemy.

Axis forces held great initial advantages. Entrenched in a mountain wilderness the enemy was almost inaccessible. A mumbo-jumbo mass of steep, rugged hills and gorges—which were eroded and difficult to traverse—made barren Guetaria a difficult objective for an infantry attack. Scaling its rises was so utterly fatiguing that it left an individual with little incentive to pitch into a death struggle. Enemy strategy was based upon nature's own fortress. The Axis was concentrated only at the passes . . . the gateways which were *natural avenues of approach.*

On March 25th Colonel George B. Barth was appointed Division chief of staff, relieving old-timer Colonel Samuel A. Gibson, who had at one time commanded the 47th Infantry.

General Patton had received his instructions from the 18th Army Group (General Sir Harold Alexander); they were explicit and they were important. The Ninth and 1st Divisions were to launch an attack on the Gafsa-Gabes axis, so as to open El Guettar Pass north of Hill 369, thus allowing the 1st Armored to roll through the pass. In simple terms, that meant the two infantry divisions were to seize opposite sides of the canyon, insuring that American tanks would not encounter flanking opposition as they drove through and into the inner plain.

The attack was ordered in three phases. Initially the road junction north of Djebel Berda and the hills bordering this junction would be secured. Next, the infantry divisions would advance as far forward as a pass which fell between Djebels Chemsi and Ben Krier. When the second phase was completed, the way would be opened for the 1st Armored Division vehicles to break through to Djebel Tebaga Fatnassa. It was somewhat like a well-planned football play . . . with the line opening a hole for the backfield. The final phase of this plan was tied in with the movement of the Eighth Army to the north, and would be executed only upon orders of the 18th Army Group. The third phase was the *touchdown* drive . . . the movement of the 1st Armored to its objective, where it would begin operations against German lines of communications.

America's portion of the conflict was scheduled to begin on March 27th or 28th, depending upon the state of readiness of the units involved. The latter date was final choice and *Field Order No. 16,* the

Ninth's first Divisional attack directive was issued . . . H-Hour would fall at 6 A.M.!

* * * *

THE Ninth had a plan which seemed as good as any could be. It took into consideration the fact that a frontal attack over the open plains would be courting military suicide. Consequently, the Division was to assemble at the eastern base of Djebel Berda by a series of night movements. Then the 47th Infantry would work east along the northern base of Berda. One battalion would proceed via Debjel El Kreroua, and one via Djebel Lettouchi, effecting capture of Hill 369 from the west in a two-pronged attack. As insurance of success, the 1st Battalion of the 39th Infantry was to follow the 47th C.T., being committed only when the Ninth deemed its aid necessary. The remainder of the *Falcons* would stay in Division reserve . . . motorized for rapid displacement. Divarty was reinforced by the 17th Field Artillery (also trained at Fort Bragg) and their combined big-gunpower was to begin hammering the enemy at the stroke of H-Hour. That was the strategy; it seemed simple and fairly foolproof.

But the terrain intervened to change the situation. Off to one side of the Ninth Division zone was Hill 772, a djebel which furnished the area's dominating position. From that lofty mount a defender could render all else untenable for miles around. *Darby's Rangers* had been in possession of this strongpoint when the 1st Division held both sides of the pass, but when the 1st displaced north the *Rangers* went along. Word of this did not reach the Ninth Division, unfortunately, until just prior to the engagement, and in the interim Axis forces had hastily reoccupied Hill 772. Since the Ninth's entire plan of attack had been formulated and was in the process of execution, all that could be done was to continue with a slightly revised plan—one which gave a battalion of the 39th Infantry the sole mission of taking the hill. Had 772 remained in American hands the Division's drive would have stood a much greater chance of earlier success; now the presumption of a quick victory slowly melted away.

El Guettar was going to be a longer engagement than most of the participants then realized. The skeleton size of the Division, and Axis possession of Hill 772 told the story adequately and well.

At H-Hour the 47th was just one mile west of El Hamra Ridge, which it had reached by successive night movements. Because of darkness and poor maps this was thought to be Hill 369, the objective. Artillery boomed and the *Raiders* went into their attack. The 1st Battalion, leading, was stopped by fire from the ridge . . . it deployed and returned the morning greetings while the 3rd Battalion, following, slipped around to the south. El Hamra fell quickly, the first of many German positions to be captured by the *Raiders* during World War II . . . so far, so good!

Just before daybreak, the 2nd Battalion had been sent on a wide flanking movement far to the south . . . into the impossible gullies and hills near Djebels Kreroua and Lettouchi. This battalion was not as fortunate as the other two of the 47th. Had the maneuver worked, Hill 369 might have been taken sooner; however, misfortune intervened, and the entire unit became caught in a pocket of murderous fire while it was still dark. For almost two days the whereabouts of a large portion of the 2nd Battalion was not known by the Ninth.

Company *E* had been leading when the 2nd Battalion was hit by cross-fire of machine guns. Company *G* tried immediately to outflank the enemy and stop his stream of death . . . to no avail. The defenders had strong positions, and Companies *F*, *G* and *H* were forced to withdraw to the nearest cover. Although these units took up the fire fight, Company *E* was hit too badly to continue the engagement. The greatest loss to the battalion that morning, however, was in personnel captured, among whom were:

Lt. Col. Louis Gershenow, Battalion C.O.
1st Lt. Willard G. Duckworth, Battalion S-2
2nd Lt. Sidney A. Thal, Battalion Communications Officer
Captain Ben K. Humphrey and 175 men of Company *E*
Captain Francis M. Smith and six soldiers of Company *F*
One officer and 30 men of Company *G*
Captain Horace M. Spaulding, C.O. of Company *H*

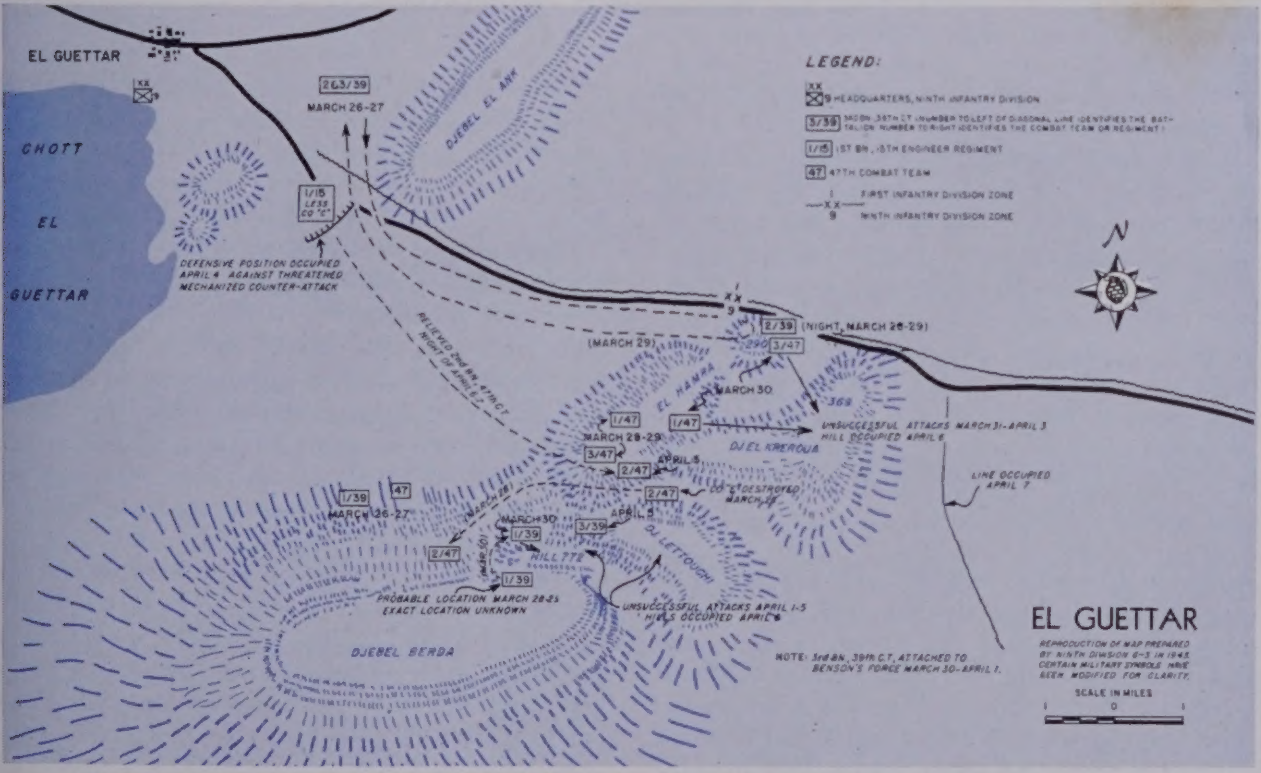
Lt. Crane Campbell, Aide-de-Camp to General Eisenhower

With this setback the 1st Battalion of the 39th was committed by the Ninth . . . having the mission of extending the southern envelopment. But this unit became lost in the maze of djebels as well and did not see action the first day. That night the Ninth's tactics had to take into consideration the fact that one of its six battalions was lost, another badly mauled . . . and the enemy retained the heights.

The first night on the line was not only cold . . . it was miserable. But most of the nights which followed were to be equally distasteful, for as one captain remarked later, "El Guettar was thought to be a one-day operation . . . no blankets . . . no coats were taken along!"

At the close of day, casualties were removed to the rear by the medics and members of the Division Band . . . as they would be for the next ten nights. These hard-working and gallant dealers in mercy soon were to discover that the enemy paid little attention to Red Cross litters, marked vehicles or armbands. Often he showered such insignia with artillery, mortar and machine-gun fire.

Disregarding initial losses, the Division continued to attack toward its objective. The 2nd Battalion of the 39th left its reserve positions to assault Hill 369 from the north under the cover of pre-dawn darkness. Cool night air breezed through the heavily-laden trucks as the *Falcons* drove southwest along the Gafsa-Gabes highway. But they had gotten off their course—due to maps or other reasons—and the column ran smack into Hill 290 (which was not shown on the map). Here a withering rain of German and Italian ammunition peppered the vehicles and the ground around them. Badly demoralized, the 2nd was forced to withdraw with heavy losses to its original positions. As the battalion retired, it left behind its gallant commander, Lt. Colonel Walter M. Oakes and a handful of equally determined soldiers who tried to carry out their mission notwithstanding the odds. As might be ex-


EL GUETTAR
CHOTT
EL
GUETTAR
2&3/39
MARCH 26-27
DJEBEL EL ANK
1/15 LESS CO "C"
DEFENSIVE POSITION OCCUPIED APRIL 4 AGAINST THREATENED MECHANIZED COUNTER-ATTACK
RELIEVED 2nd BN, 47th CT NIGHT OF APRIL 6-7
(MARCH 29)
2/39 (NIGHT, MARCH 28-29)
290
3/47
MARCH 30
EL HAMRA
369
1/47
1/47
UNSUCCESSFUL ATTACKS MARCH 31-APRIL 3 HILL OCCUPIED APRIL 6
MARCH 28-29
3/47
2/47
APRIL 5
DJ EL KREROUA
2/47
CO "E" DESTROYED MARCH 28
LINE OCCUPIED APRIL 7
1/39
47
MARCH 26-27
(MARCH 28)
MARCH 30
1/39
3/39
APRIL 5
2/47
(MAR. 30)
HILL 772
1/39
PROBABLE LOCATION MARCH 28-25 EXACT LOCATION UNKNOWN
DJ LETTOUCHI
UNSUCCESSFUL ATTACKS APRIL 1-5 HILLS OCCUPIED APRIL 6
DJEBEL BERDA
NOTE: 3rd BN, 39th C.T. ATTACHED TO BENSON'S FORCE MARCH 30-APRIL 1.
LEGEND:
XX 9 HEADQUARTERS, NINTH INFANTRY DIVISION
3/39 3RD BN, 39TH C.T. (NUMBER TO LEFT OF DIAGONAL LINE IDENTIFIES THE BATTALION NUMBER TO RIGHT IDENTIFIES THE COMBAT TEAM OR REGIMENT)
1/15 1ST BN, 15TH ENGINEER REGIMENT
47 47TH COMBAT TEAM
1 FIRST INFANTRY DIVISION ZONE
XX
9 NINTH INFANTRY DIVISION ZONE
N
REPRODUCTION OF MAP PREPARED BY NINTH DIVISION G-3 IN 1943. CERTAIN MILITARY SYMBOLS HAVE BEEN MODIFIED FOR CLARITY.
SCALE IN MILES
1 0 1

FALCON SWITCHBOARD . . . EL GUETTAR

pected most of these individuals were either killed or captured, despite their bravery.

With Hill 369 remaining in Axis hands, the attack bogged down. Contrary to preliminary briefing, these were not ordinary positions, but rather a rocky fortress, protected by barbed wire and mutually supporting fires. Part of the enemy's growing resistance could be explained by the fact that he was strengthening the pass area with fresh troops from the south. And while that was good news in one sense—since it meant that the mission of the II Corps was being accomplished—reinforcements for the defenders meant a tougher time in store for foot soldiers of the Ninth Division.

* * * *

A REORGANIZED Ninth met the foe on March 30th. The *lost battalion* was back with the Division, although slightly the worse for wear, and sights were fixed to the east. But obstacles continued to trip the Ninth. One of these was a faulty map which led a battalion to report that it had captured Hill 369 when it had taken nearby Hill 290—the djebel not shown on available maps—and this information was forwarded to General Patton. Closer examination during the following day disclosed that 290 could not possibly be the objective, and a red-faced Division notified II Corps of its error.

Corps ordered the drive continued and for the next five days the struggle for Hills 369 and 772 was carried on unabated. At first Hill 369 bore the brunt of the Ninth's attack; then it was realized that the objective could be taken *only* by first gaining the dominating heights of Hill 772. The latter djebel had been by-passed and was holding up the entire Corps advance. All-out efforts made against both strongpoints continued to meet a military stonewall.

These attacks were coordinated with several attempts of *Benson's Force*—an armored task force to which the 3rd Battalion of the 39th was attached for several days—to break through the pass. Pushed back several times by well-placed 88mm gunfire and opposing tanks, Benson finally broke through—only to be forced back again. Von Arnim's men realized fully the value of their positions and held on stubbornly, repulsing all drives.

The effect of strenuous fighting was beginning to show on face after face, and each advancing day of combat weighed down more heavily upon the men up front. They were becoming weary of their mountain battlefield . . . of nights and days with interrupted snatches of sleep . . . of wearing the same clothing until it assumed a laminated appearance. During the day the hot dry air was filled with gusts of sand and dust . . . at night the temperature dropped to the other extreme, causing teeth to chatter and bones to ache. And then there was the 'round-the-clock enemy air activity, designed to keep the Americans on edge. *Stukas, Messerschmidts* and *Focke-Wolfes* roared over daily from their all-weather fields, while heavy winds often kept the AAF grounded on its temporary landing strips. In addition to other discomforts, men on the line were tired of these enemy air attacks . . . just plain tired!

Nonetheless, the dorsal-pass fighting continued. Corps had called the second phase of the attack, in spite of Axis opposition (on Hills 369 and 772) which kept the Division from complying. It appeared as if large numbers of tanks were being dispatched by the enemy to aid his defenses of El Guettar and Maknassy passes, meaning that the Axis was being tricked into the left wall *valve*. Although such actions evinced little contemporary joy from the men who had to oppose them, armor, guns and planes taken from the southern front and sent to Guetaria meant earlier realization of Montgomery's compression stroke.

Many of these tanks were destroyed by the 26th Field Artillery, and *Spitfires* caught a huge flight of attacking German planes, downing fourteen and causing the remainder to scatter. On March 31st, 100 Italians surrendered to a single artilleryman of the 34th F.A. Thus the overall plan was working—and working well for the Allies!

Success of the piston-like operation called for tenacious warfare—the type which allowed little grass to grow under the restive feet of Allied spearheads. Appropriately, before the battle at El Guettar entered its finale, Corps received a directive from the 18th Army Group to the effect that as soon as the Eighth Army broke through the Akarit position, the Ninth Infantry Division was to move north to the left flank of the British V Corps. There the Ninth would take over a lengthy front extending to the blue Mediterranean . . . and climaxing the final phase with a spark which was destined to explode the Axis out of North Africa.

* * * *

ONE point was glaringly evident after the first week of fighting at Guetaria. While much of the trouble experienced by the Ninth could be traced to faulty intelligence, rugged terrain and inaccurate maps, a majority of the difficulty stemmed from the Division itself. Despite their assault landings against the French, this was the first stiff encounter for the 39th and 47th C.T.'s. For the most part the Ninth Division's leaders were inexperienced and its troops were green. It would be unfair to place the blame entirely—or conveniently—upon someone or something else.

Fortunately, after its initial setbacks the Division emerged as a going concern. It had made mistakes . . . and would make many more before the war ended. Nobody is perfect. But as an efficient fighting machine the Ninth was fast becoming of age. Witness of this fact was a vast group of men who daily were doing much more than ordinarily could be expected of soldiers. Society prefers to know them as *heroes,* but since every man who serves in combat might be termed a hero, a better designation might be *outstanding soldiers.*

There were so many of these men in North Africa that the Division had a set quota—with only the most *outstanding soldiers* obtaining recognition by medal. One of these was Corporal William J. McCoy who charged an enemy machine-gun nest, destroyed the weapon and was instrumental in capturing forty prisoners. Another outstanding corporal was Nicholas E. Miller. Corporal Miller rushed out under fire and gallantly rescued wounded Corporal Patrick J. Talbot and Private Ray Thornton from the battlefield, getting them into a position of safety. Much-decorated Captain Guy E. Carr earned a *D.S.C.* while leading his company over flat open ground—in the fact of machine-gun fire. After his unit was pinned down, Carr stood up and advanced alone—

firing directly into the machine-gun position, knocking out one gun and forcing the gun crew to surrender.

Sergeant Earll E. Wells, Corporal Lenard J. Mazotti and Private Audry G. Morris had an excuse to draw back to a covered position, since they were under enemy observation and fire. These GIs chose to remain at their posts, however, keeping communications open from the attacking units to their C.P. And there are few witnesses who will forget the deeds of First Lieutenant (Chaplain) Earl E. Ray. Under heavy enemy fire he made his way to an advanced aid station, gave first aid, assisted in administering plasma, acted as a litter bearer, gave immediate psychotherapy and supervised the feeding and comfort of the wounded before they were evacuated to the rear.

These are just a few of the names, chosen at random without regard to regiment or company from a huge roster which never will be completed accurately. There were many more *outstanding soldiers* who sparked the Ninth at El Guettar . . . men from every branch of the service and from all walks of life. Mentioning a combat team or division in battle means a good bit more than infantry, for there is a great deal of inter-dependence on the field of combat. Banded together, these soldiers become a team capable of things its members would not dream possible.

Such was the team which now was growing out of a green Division. Men of the Ninth did not want to be there fighting at El Guettar . . . not really. A million other places would have been much better. But there was a job to be done and getting it over with seemed like a good idea. The enemy also had ideas . . . big schemes hatched by well-trained military minds.

* * * *

VON ARNIM was up to something; a blanket of artillery shells was falling fast and furiously from his well-emplaced batteries. It was April 4th and II Corps had received a report that there might be a mechanized attack in the offing. To halt any such thrust the 15th Engineers became *infantry* and occupied positions before El Guettar at 8 P.M.

This had been a day of armored activity on the part of the 10th *Panzer* Division, with five of its tanks destroyed by *tankbusters* of the 26th F.A. In the airways enemy bombing and strafing missions had diminished . . . and that was indicative of something, too. Listening to captured Italian prisoners might have given the truthful answer. The P.W.'s were unanimous in stating that their troops were afraid to fight, but that Nazi officers and non-coms still held control . . . forcing them into battle. That looked as if part of the Axis had consumed its fill of war.

> The Ninth Infantry Division, operating for the first time as a Division, had entered the Battle of El Guettar severely handicapped. Despite this fact, and despite the fact that the Division was guilty of the mistakes expected of a unit in its initial engagement with the enemy, the operation proved to be an eventual success. The conduct of the individual soldier was reassuring and gratifying. Opposing crafty and veteran soldiers, our troops showed courage and ability. With one battle behind them, they were now ready to enter the next operation a wiser and more able fighting unit.
>
> —Major General Manton S. Eddy.

Nevertheless, higher headquarters intelligence reports continued to dribble in . . . claiming that the Germans were being reinforced greatly and might counterattack. Consequently, the American attack planned for April 5th was called off and the Ninth held all troops in readiness for any eventuality.

Then April 6th—Army Day—dawned. Instead of attacking, however, the enemy now showed every indication of a withdrawal. Once more the piston strategy demonstrated its soundness, as the 1st and Ninth Divisions were ordered to complete phase two of the master plan. One-half of the 15th Engineer Battalion relieved the 2nd Battalion of the 47th Infantry on El Hamra, and the *Raiders* prepared to press ahead. At 5:45 P.M. the 47th was directed into the attack by Colonel Randle, who exhorted his company commanders to . . . "Get your companies on the obective. Use your mortars on their machine guns. Do not allow one machine gun or mortar to hold up your advance!"

Those were bold words to tell somebody else . . . but the intrepid colonel was right up front himself. On one occasion he led a squad up to the heights held by the enemy. That was the spirit of *the chase* which had taken hold of the 39th and 47th C.T.'s, and Djebel Lettouchi fell . . . blood-bathed Hill 772 fell . . . only Hill 369 remained to block the Division's advance.

Aerial observation, patrolling and reconnaisance disclosed that the enemy withdrawal had begun in earnest. By April 7th Djebel Berda was believed to be evacuated completely and the Axis forces were reported in general retreat. That was accurate information, for Von Arnim was extricating his holdouts and heading north—where the enemy would make another *last stand*. With the *Falcons* and the *Raiders* pursuing the retreating defenders of El Guettar, the Ninth Division shortly was able to report Hill 369 *definitely* captured. Soon afterward the final objective line was reached and the exhilarating grasp of victory felt good in the hands of a near-exhausted Ninth.

At 5:05 P.M. *Benson's Force* contacted the British Eighth Army coming up from the south . . . the Allies were joined and the Battle of El Guettar was over, finished, a memory to forget or brag about. The enemy had withstood over two million rounds of every conceivable type of ammunition . . . now he was retreating. *Jerry,* too, would have memories of El Guettar!

When the Ninth Infantry Division reached its objective, it was ordered by 18th Army Group to leave for another area via Bou Chebka. So ten days after the opening of its first big battle, the Division commenced movement back to that border town. Here it occupied the same positions that it had previously . . . a wiser, more tired unit . . . happier than ever before to enjoy peace and quiet. The greatest lesson it had learned was that in warfare it is important to capture the high ground first, and *that* one truth proved the basis of all future Ninth Division operations.

Rest, recuperation, replacement and letter-writing were the new order of business. This gratifying breather was short-lived, however . . . there was work to be done to the north. Somebody had to spark the compression stroke, and the Ninth was a part of that somebody!

II—Northern Tunisia

The country in which the 9th Division is expected to operate in the near future is completely different from that near El Guettar. Although hilly, it will be found that the hills are covered with trees and scrub, both of which are very thick in places and render observation difficult. The valleys are generally swampy and tank action is mainly confined to or near the roads . . .

—*Ninth Division Training Memo.*

MORE trouble and another battle lay to the north. A decisive and concluding engagement between the growing strength of the Allies and the veteran campaigners of the Axis loomed into view. For that struggle the rapidly diminishing legions of Rommel, Von Arnim and Italian Marshal Messe had withdrawn into the natural fortress area before Bizerte and Tunis. Although short of artillery and armor, the Axis was sitting astride one of the finest defensive sectors on the dark continent of Africa. Nature had provided the enemy with a region well-suited to small unit delaying action; and holding this initial advantage, fanatical Nazi warlords believed a lengthy resistance possible.

Had it been possible to walk through the center of the enemy lines—all the way around from Cape Serrat to Enfidaville—an almost impenetrable combination of cultivated valleys, jungle, djebels and desert would have been disclosed . . . all the hindrances of nature which characterize North Africa. The Axis had suffered a stunning defeat at Wadi Akarit to the south and had retreated from Maknassy and El Guettar. Nonetheless, this new defensive *utopia* offered the oft-reprieved aggressors yet another chance.

Considering all the facts, one almost is inclined to believe that the piston strategy now would bog down. But it did not. One good reason was the swift and secret displacement of the American II Corps—from the very bottom to the very top of the Tunisian front—before the enemy realized what had transpired. Making possible this movement was a newly attained mastery of the air which rested securely in the grasp of the AAF and RAF. Military ingenuity did the rest.

To understand this maneuver a little better, it might be well to explain a few of the reasons behind it; for they were not all dictates of strategy or whim. Throughout the Tunisian campaign the American Army in Africa had grown to a strength of 500,000 men. II Corps had expanded correspondingly . . . until its manpower count numbered 100,000 by the time of El Guettar.

Initially, the British-run 18th Army Group had been using the steady trickle of U.S. Army units to augment its strength. Even after reaching *adulthood,* the II Corps often split beyond recognition. General Patton (and later General Bradley) had insisted that the American II Corps be given an important objective—one which would grant full recognition to the U.S. Army for the part it was playing in the Tunisian campaign. It was desired, furthermore, that all American troops be under U.S. Army leadership. As a result, II Corps was informed that its next major objective would be Bizerte . . . a mission which called for unusual rapidity in displacement if the battle were to be joined in time.

Campaigning in the north necessitated the transfer of 100,000 soldiers, their equipment and supplies an average of 150 miles . . . within the short space of a few days. This was accomplished skillfully by traveling across the lines of communications of the British First Army, which then was engaging the enemy.

By far the longest and most difficult displacement was that of the Ninth Infantry Division, which motored from the southernmost to the northernmost sector of Tunisia . . . arriving first on line. That was a safari of over 200 miles for the Ninth. The jaunt began at Bou Chebka, rolled to and through Tebessa, then on to Roum es Souk. From here the Ninth was to carry on a campaign against the strong Ainchouna-Jefna defenses already begun by the British 46th Infantry Division. Jefna was a keystone of Axis power in the north. Its protecting gateway—the famous Green-Bald Hill positions—had been assaulted unsuccessfully by the British three times, now the men of the *Octofoil* were going to have a try.

Led by the *Raiders* who were first into position, the Ninth carried out its relief of the British. Crisp morning air enveloped the area as the 47th effected its changeover with the battle-weary 138th Brigade at 2 A.M. on the 13th. Twenty-six hours later the Ninth Reconnaissance Troop replaced the 46th Reconnaissance Squadron near Bazina. More of the Division continued to arrive in the vicinity; and, by April 16th, the 39th C.T. was just south of Sedjenane Valley—occupying the former positions of the 1st Parachute Brigade. Leading elements of the 60th C.T., meanwhile, had reached Roum es Souk under the direction of General Stroh. Since secrecy was desired the *Go-Devils* were held in a concealed rear position near Djebel Abiod until April 19th.

When the II Corps arrived on line, Major General (General) Omar N. Bradley, former deputy under General Patton, was the new Corps commander. General Bradley was not a bombshell of publicity, but rather a quiet, efficient, likable military strategist. Until the end of the war, and with little break, the Ninth was to serve under this distinguished and able soldier . . . in his corps, his army and his army group. He generally has been considered as an honorary, if not actual member of the Ninth.

America's II Corps had not as yet assumed command of the area when the Ninth relieved the British. For a short time, the Division was attached to the V Corps of the British Army. Then on April 18th, II Corps took command of its new sector, completing an efficient and difficult displacement.

Not only General Bradley's command, but the entire Allied military machine had followed closely at the heels of a retreating enemy. For once the *Desert Fox* was not allowed time to reinforce and build up a complete ring of fortifcations. Marshal Rommel must have sensed defeat, for he soon deserted his sinking *Afrika Korps* and fled to Nazidom and the *Fuehrer.* There a medal and a new command awaited the man who had tried to imitate *Stonewall* Jackson.

At this time the defenders were holding a line which ran through Enfidaville-Bou Arada-Medjez el Bab-Sedjenane-Cape Serrat. Opposing the enemy at Enfidaville was the Eighth Army. It was to act as a holding force, halting any escape of the foe into the Cape Bon Peninsula. Concurrently, the British First Army in the center was to launch the main attack down the Medjerda and Miliane Valleys, ending inside the great Tunisian coastal plain. Northward were the II Corps and its attached Corps Franc d'Afrique. Attaining their objectives meant slicing through a mountainous belt some twenty miles deep, pouring onto the high ground southeast of Mateur and driving past either side of Chouigui. At the same time, the djebel region north of Jefna, the Jefna position and the area west of Garaet (Lake) Achkel were to be taken. That would place the U.S. Army in command of Mateur—an important communications and road center—and open the way to Bizerte, the final objective.

Using the parlance of football once again, the ball was being carried through the center while the ends drew off the enemy. Once the Axis was thrown off balance, the Allies simultaneously would power-drive through the center and around the ends.

* * * *

COMBINED air-ground activity seldom was more coordinated than at the beginning of this last great Tunisian offensive. Great quantities of Axis supplies and reinforcements never reached the front . . . having been knocked out of the air by the expanding AAF and RAF. Doughboys appreciated such assistance even more during the latter part of April, when the skies were practically free of enemy aircraft. The dreaded 'round-the-clock bombing and strafing had ended!

Allied generals appreciated this mastery of the air, too. Their plans often had gone wrong in the past because of the enemy's *eyes in the sky*. At least now, when the Allies faced their most rugged terrain, much precious information would be denied the Axis.

But winning the battle overhead did not rid the Allies of all their headaches. Final victory required solving the problem of variant topography as well. Whereas the southern flank of II Corps was greatly similar to the terrain found at El Guettar, that to the far north was a jungle-like continuation of hills. A few valleys wound through this dense alpine undergrowth of brush and scrub—they were the canyon pathways for rivers, railroads and highways. On the other hand, these valleys were also enemy lanes of fire . . . for Axis troops were entrenched on the heights, awaiting an opportunity to spray bullets and drop shells upon any intruder.

This northern sector was the zone of the Ninth Division. Whereas the other three divisions of the American sector together covered a thirteen-mile front, the Ninth was burdened with a twenty-eight mile line—including the Jefna position . . . a concrete emplaced pillbox of nature. Actually this engagement was almost a separate one from the other II Corps operations, although it was one which had a most definite bearing upon the entire offensive.

Important objectives assigned the Division included the Jefna (Green-Bald Hill) position and the heights to its rear—which were astride and guarded the only decent road in the north leading to Mateur and Bizerte. Coincidentally, the Ninth was to drive against the road junction just west of Garaet Achkel which dominated the northern approaches to Mateur. Success meant cutting off the enemy in the north and simultaneously forcing him to retreat along the entire front.

Waiting and seemingly ready, the Axis was astride three main approaches to the east: Jefna, the high ground commanding the head of the Sedjenane Valley (Djebels Ainchouna and Dardyss), and a secondary road to the north (at Djebel Touro and Ac es Zapa).

* * * *

WHEN a fighting force is confronted by an obstacle of fifteen to twenty miles of mountains . . . irregular, hazardous, jungle-like . . . it is likely to use valleys or roads for an approach. The enemy calculated that the Americans would do just this. But that was an incorrect supposition, one which worked nicely into the plans of the Ninth Division.

General Eddy had decided that the only way to take the Jefna stumbling block was to flank it. The bulk of the Ninth was to move north of these positions, seize Kef en Nsour and cut the main road east

THE FRENCH AND GOUMS

ATTACHED to the Ninth at this time was the Corps Franc d'Afrique . . . colorful, brave and poorly equipped. A hodge-podge of humanity made up the Corps . . . Spanish Loyalists-in-exile, Jewish refugees from Vichy France and Germany, DeGaulist *Free French*, so-called *political* prisoners (who had been released by the still pro-Vichy local government—in hopes that they would die in action) and fierce-looking Berber tribesmen . . . the Goumiers of legendary fierceness.

The Corps Franc consisted of three infantry battalions, one marine battalion and an attached Tabour (battalion) of Goums. Its commanding officer was General of Brigade Magnam, one of the men who had tried—unsuccessfully—to aid the American landings in Morocco. He was imprisoned by General Nogues, later released and exiled to command what amounted to another *Foreign Legion*. The Corps was without any transportation to speak of; medical attention was lacking; food was scarce and supplies were inadequate. Attachment of the Corps Franc to the Ninth Division meant that the Ninth had to furnish trucks, mules, medics and food to keep the outfit rolling.

Brave men . . . dirty men . . . old men . . . young men . . . the Corps Franc had them all. However, its best-known attachment was its Tabour of Goums. These fanatical bathrobe-attired Goumiers were feared mortally by the enemy—particularly the Italians. They were discredited and credited with every type of barbarism—both by the enemy and by self-appointed publicity agents.

The Berbers are a tribe of swarthy white mountaineers, who, although Mohammedan by faith, had been driven into the fastness of the Atlas Mountains by Arabs (who also were Mohammedans), although the latter never conquered them. French authorities hired whole Goums (clans) as warriors. Later the word *Goum* came to mean *irregular* soldier, and the Berbers grew to dislike the expression.

Finding that dried enemy ears offered souvenir value to GIs, the Goums began cutting off ears of German and Italian dead and traded with them. Soon a legend grew that Goumiers killed for ears and heads.

Goum pay was what a Goumier could loot and a Goumier's *djeballah* (bathrobe-like burnoose) carried his worldly goods. He would put everything he owned inside his tent-like clothing; increased girth meant increased wealth. But loot and all, the Berbers could hike over fifty miles without stopping. They could sneak through woods and brush so silently that the enemy was constantly surprised . . . places where GIs generally made some sort of warning rustle or noise.

Because they spoke no English or French, the Goums used no passwords. They simply ran a light-fingered hand over the back of a man's helmet. If American or French, the wayfarer would pass unharmed; if not, a split throat and a looted body told the story. Many is the Yank, who walking through a clearing at night felt a *twig* or *branch* hit his helmet. It generally was a Goum on guard duty . . . getting the *password!*

Interesting facts are many about these battling mountain men. A few outstanding features of Goum warfare were: their weapons—a *Koumia* (10-inch Moroccan knife) plus such rifles as they could obtain; their family life—Goums carried their women along with them, the latter staying slightly behind the battle; their fatalism—they were not afraid of death, shaved their heads, except for a pigtail by which they could be hauled into heaven by *Allah*.

Combined with the fanatics and brave men of its other units, the Goums made the Corps Franc as courageous (if not as efficient) as any group in action. Few were more colorful.

---

of the objective. This would turn the flank. Unlike El Guettar sweat was to be substituted for blood; and the jungle terrain, rough as it was, would serve as a path for the flanking battalions.

The plan developed into one of the most brilliant envelopments in the history of the war . . . a so-called *classic example* of flanking. It consisted of two separate battles, one for Jefna and the other for the Sedjenane Valley. At Jefna the 47th Infantry focused the center of the enemy's attention with localized holding attacks. Meanwhile, the 39th C.T. made a wide flanking sweep—through country thought impenetrable by the enemy—and worked around to the rear of the Green-Bald Hill mass. Then, from atop commanding ground, the 39th was able to call artillery fire on any part of the enemy's positions quite easily. This made the foe's strongpoints untenable. North of the Sedjenane the 60th C.T. and the Corps Franc executed a similar movement. The French drove straight ahead while the 60th performed a series of flanking maneuvers through almost impassable terrain, bottling up the enemy to the north.

General Irwin, whose artillery had proved the trump card at Thala, now faced another difficult situation. The front was abnormally long. Even with artillery reinforcements, this lengthy sector could not be covered adequately if the battalions remained together. Divarty was split, therefore, into two groups—one for the north and one for the south. A centralized control was established and, although the American field pieces were in full view of the enemy during much of this operation, good support was seldom lacking for the infantry . . . notwithstanding difficulties of supply and displacement.

* * * *

THE clock ticked on . . . hours and days passed and the big offensive was near at hand. Hitler's birthday anniversary fell on April 20th but nothing of a predicted enemy *birthday present attack* resulted. On the contrary, the British captured Enfidaville and the Germans pulled back several miles.

For the Ninth Division, these semi-quiet days before the storm were put to excellent use. Medical collecting men of the *Raider* regiment set up a rest camp for men on the line; the 60th C.T. continued to move secretly by night, gradually easing into its new positions, and the Ninth began learning a new and valuable lesson of warfare—the art of patrolling. While the enemy was able to out-patrol the Americans initially, the doughs soon caught the hang of patrolling and mastered it. The result was a knowledge of the enemy which gave confidence to the fighting men of the Division.

Another day clicked off the clock . . . and another . . . April 22nd dawned to find the men of the Ninth positioned for the drive which would begin on the following morning. Field orders, reports and last-minute checking occupied the majority of time. There was all sorts of news. The French and Goums were going to act as a sort of *fourth* regiment of the Division . . . they had come in from Cape Serrat to avenge the past and glorify the future.

GENERAL IRWIN

More hours melted away and the quiet air of the Sedjenane and the Melah now was charged with expectancy. Artillery was warned not to register until the attack. And a final word came from the Division commander, General Eddy:

"This Division will shortly be called upon to take part in the combined attack of the 18th Army Group that will mark the end of Axis resistance in North Africa.

"In your previous engagements at Port Lyautey, Safi, and in Southern Tunisia you have done well. You have endured the privations of campaign, suffered heavy casualties, and have emerged from your baptism of fire with the stamp of approval given only through battle-field performance.

"We are now to have the opportunity of attacking alongside our comrades of the Second U.S. Corps, the British First and Eighth Armies and the French Nineteenth Corps and Corps Franc. We are making history. I charge you and expect you to put forth every ounce of effort, with a ruthlessness that has been taught us by our enemies. This I know you will do. *We must advance and keep driving forward* no matter how hard the going may be. Resistance met must be reduced by outflanking maneuver by all units from the platoon up.

"A world spotlight will be focused on us from the moment we attack until we have killed, captured or driven every Axis soldier from Tunisia. We have the finest arms and equipment in the world. We outnumber our opponents both on land and in the air. The cards are stacked in our favor. Anything less than annihilation of the enemy will be a blot on our record.

"I have the utmost confidence in this Division. I know that every officer and man will put into the coming fight everything he has in him so that our Division will contribute its full share toward a speedy, decisive victory. Good Luck." The Division commander's letter was almost a prophesy of what later transpired.

* * * *

PROBABLY the more important of the Ninth's two initial drives was the flanking of Jefna. This station was protected to the west by a narrow pass through which ran the railroad and highway. On either side of the pass stretched belts of mountains, broken only by the twin peaks guarding the entrance —Green Hill on the north and Bald Hill to the south. Taking these positions by frontal assault was militarily unfeasible, yet flanking either side of the pass presented an equally difficult problem.

Synchronized watches read 5:30 A.M. as the Division moved forward on April 23rd. At first it appeared as if the Ninth's previous errors might be repeated, judging by some actions that opening day. Shortly before noon it was reported erroneously that all regiments had reached their D-Day objectives and were encountering little resistance. But these first reports proved only partly correct; for while the 47th and 60th C.T.'s had reached their objectives, the 39th C.T. in the center was meeting stubborn opposition from the dominating heights of Djebel Ainchouna. Night fell, and the "leading elements" of the 39th "were in a state of confusion and had only reached the lower slopes of the Djebel."

Operating just south of the Oued Sedjenane the 39th faced both a determined foe and a jungle-covered barrier—which was about six miles long and thirteen miles deep. Man-high brush and scrub were entwined into an almost solid mass of vegetation. Making matters worse, the enemy had worked clearings and peaks into a protective system of automatic fire and mines; and although the defenders were hidden from view much of the time, they could look down upon the advancing troops.

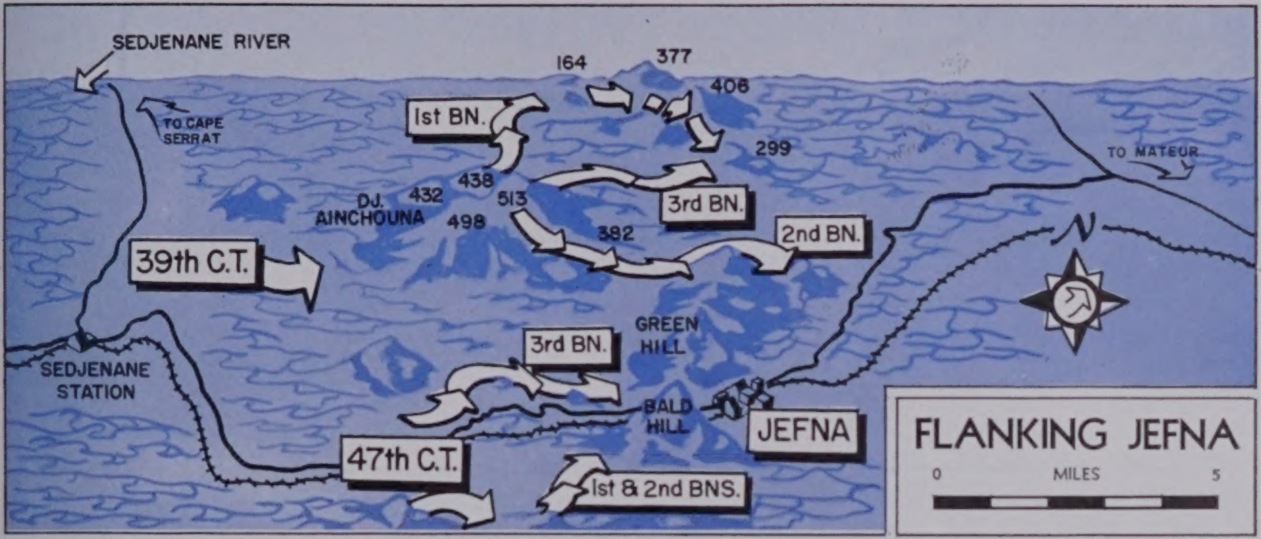
The whole action was a series of limited objectives, the monotonous taking of hill after briar-and-brush-tight hill. The problem of supply was never more acute: mules obtained by Corps from the French were the answer to the infantry battalion's problem over the narrow, steep, and many times booby-trapped trails . . .

—Artillery Report, Northern Tunisia.

To reach its first major objective, Djebel Azag (from whence it could force the enemy to withdraw from Jefna) the 39th C.T. was required to cross the enemy-infected Djebel Ainchouna to its front. Ainchouna is four miles long and its two dominating peaks are each over 1,500 feet in altitude. Following the capture of this barrier the *Falcons* were to seize a series of high djebels in order to outflank the Axis.

When the attack began the 1st and 3rd Battalions were spearheading the drive against Ainchouna's tallest peak—Hill 438—and the Axis was waiting with artillery and tanks acting as roving artillery. At the same time, another drama was taking place slightly to the rear. Colonel J. Trimble Brown, C.O. of the 39th, and his staff were moving their C.P. when a 150-man German combat patrol attacked the group, capturing the Colonel, his staff and the complete plans for the coming week.

Captain Felix P. Settlemire, who subsequently received a *D.S.C.* for the action which followed, was



in command of a small observation party which also was surrounded by the enemy. He observed that Colonel Brown and his party were being held captive. The captain fearlessly escaped from the trap, contacted reinforcements, and proceeded back ahead of them. Although wounded painfully, Settlemire was instrumental in rescuing the regimental commander and his group. About forty-five Germans were killed and many captured during the skirmish, but the important plans were lost permanently to the enemy.

Meanwhile, the remainder of the combat team was meeting a steel wall of small-arms, mortar and machine-gun fire—which, added to the rugged terrain, stopped the 39th from reaching its objective. Despite enormous setbacks suffered, the persistent *Falcons* continued their drive. An attack on the morning of April 24th showed the ferocity of the fighting, when the leading 1st Battalion received a terrific pounding during the 39th's push on Ainchouna. After each step forward the summit appeared a little higher. It was an almost suicidal drive up the hill against a well-entrenched enemy; but somehow the battalion reached the top. The Ninth Division *Report of Operations* takes up the story:

Several senior officers became casualties and it was only by the superior leadership of a junior captain (Capt. Conrad V. Anderson) that the battalion was able to retain its precarious hold on the mountain.

Battling on, the *Falcons* attacked to consolidate their foothold on Djebel Ainchouna. A devastating artillery preparation left 114 German dead awaiting the onrushing 39th that morning of the 25th. The regiment had teamed its fresh 3rd Battalion with the badly-mauled 1st, and backed by superior artillery support, this combination completed the occupation of Hill 438, as fiercely resisting Axis defenders finally were driven out . . . and the *Falcons* gasped for second breath.

With this mission accomplished the Germans were deprived of a valuable observation post, since the heights dominated most of Sedjenane Valley. It now was possible to have mechanized reconnaissance units advance well to the east in their probing—the 39th had captured the high ground.

* * * *

CONTINUING the envelopment to the east and southeast, the 39th C.T. made its way from djebel to djebel, ridge to ridge . . . battling nature and a fanatical enemy. It now had received a new commander, Colonel William L. Ritter (who took over from General Stroh) and a taste of victory.

The schedule of advance was resumed on the 26th when the *Falcons* moved upon Djebel El Akrat, their D-plus-1 objective. Flanking and climbing, the 39th pushed on. Hills 498, 513, and 382—all due east of Ainchouna—fell to the 2nd Battalion, and the *Falcon* advance on April 27th was the only real gain made by the Division that day. The 2nd Battalion, however, was beginning to encounter trouble at Hill 382 (a ridgeline peak) where enemy opposition had increased. Here the battalion was subjected to artillery and mortar fire for almost a week. In the meantime, the remainder of the 39th headed for the plains of Mateur.

Most of the 39th remained in place on the 28th except for the 1st Battalion, which was dispatched on a historical move. From its positions on Djebel Ainchouna, the 1st made a circuitous route to the northeast, knocked the Axis off Hill 164 (almost two miles northeast of Ainchouna) then pivoted to the right and captured Hill 336 . . . about two miles directly north of Hill 382, where the 2nd Battalion was having its rough fight. The 1st Battalion ended the day on nearby Hill 377, occupied for the purpose of jumping off against Hill 406 . . . capture of which would flank and gain the rear of the enemy positions as well as dominate the entire Green-Bald position and most of the Sedjenane Valley. Seizure of 406 was destined to become one of the decisive turning points of the campaign.

Falcons prepared for the attack against Hill 406 throughout the 29th and pushed forward successfully on the following day. The 3rd Battalion occupied the hill and then assisted the 1st Battalion's attack eastward, which culminated on Spur 299. That this area was valuable became evident upon attaining the heights. It commanded the terrain to the south and the road leading northwest (toward the head of the Sedjenane Valley); and since the enemy probably had concentrations of supplies and material for support of Green and Bald Hills located in the protection of the valley at Jefna, this was a blow at the Axis effort.

Hill 382, that thorn in the side of the 2nd Battalion, finally was cleared of the enemy with the aid of Divarty and the 39th Cannon Company. The *Falcons* now were able to direct accurate artillery fire upon any German position they desired, and this high dominant ground was put to excellent usage by forward observers. Divarty plastered everything Axis that was below . . . supply dumps and strongpoints were made untenable . . . installations were shelled mercilessly. During one twenty-four hour period the 26th F.A. sent over 4,000 shells. It was a maddening rain of death and the defenders could take it no longer. His defenses flanked, the enemy decided to move out on May 1st, leaving behind all types of supplies and equipment. The 39th was now in sight of the great Lake Achkel region and ready for its next move.

Helping to make the 39th's flanking movement successful were the well-timed diversionary attacks staged by the 47th C.T. against the Jefna stronghold. Without this line of riflemen to the south the *Falcons* would not have achieved the excellent results which crowned their efforts.

On the morning of April 23rd the 47th C.T. was five miles west of Jefna, waiting to jump off in a two-pronged drive. Its 3rd Battalion was to negotiate a hilly zone and come in from the north, occupying the enemy on Green Hill; a similar job by the 1st Battalion would be done on Bald Hill. This pressure was designed to detract any suspicion from the main effort—flanking to the north by the 39th.

The *Raider* 3rd Battalion experienced little trouble in reaching the heights before Green Hill on that first day. It remained for the 1st Battalion, however, to have the rougher time. The 1st had to cross a roller-coaster type of terrain—four miles of 2000-foot mountains—before facing Bald Hill. Both battalions kept on schedule, however, and staged such successful holding attacks that the enemy believed a frontal assault was in store.

Axis veterans had fallen victim of a very elementary boxing trick, the *one-two* punch, which feints one thrust and uses another to accomplish the knockout blow. The 47th feinted a direct assault while the 39th struck a roundhouse knockout blow via the left flank. Each segment of the strategy was equally important, although few fighting men of the 47th C.T. realized the tremendous part they were playing in the *big picture*.

Actually the Ninth Division never entertained any thought of storming *Greenie* and *Baldy*. The British had assaulted these positions three times and had withdrawn, badly defeated, on each occasion. From his excellent and long-tenable fortifications, the enemy similarly was able to withstand an incessant pounding from accurate American artillery as well as

FOR SOME ITALIANS THE WAR WAS OVER

stopping all advances of infantry until flanked by the *Falcons*.

Combat patrols of the 47th operated until the enemy withdrew. On April 28th one patrol of the 47th got on top of Green Hill and found an emplacement deep enough to require a ladder. These areas were very well mined and any full-scale attack would have met not only enemy fire but death-dealing mines as well.

> *During this time the 91st Reconnaissance Squadron patrolled to the south, protecting the right flank of the "Raiders."*

Corps had called off all attacks pending reorganization. It was May 1st . . . the enemy was retreating and the Americans were being regrouped on another part of the front. (This was the movement of the 34th Infantry Division between the 1st and Ninth Divisions). Under the Corps order a planned attack on Green and Bald Hills was called off by the 47th, and the 39th was issued a warning to hold its strategically important positions at all costs—until further instructions were issued. Jefna's envelopment was nearing completion and victory.

* * * *

MOST difficult of all terrain encountered by the Ninth Division in Africa, the zone north of the Sedjenane tested every bit of ingenuity and fortitude of the 60th C.T. and the Corps Franc. Tightly-packed jungle brush sometimes rose for eight feet or more in height. It was as if the South Pacific campaign suddenly had been transplanted atop the mountainous areas of Northern Tunisia. Notwithstanding this difficulty in its first action under Ninth Division leadership, the 60th proved more than equal the task assigned it.

April 23rd found the *Go-Devils* advancing on a line beyond the Cape Serrat-Sedjenane Station road against brush and briar. This vegetation gradually became more and more impenetrable—requiring all the jungle warfare knowledge long since forgotten by the amphibious and mountain warriors of the 60th. Despite overwhelming obstacles the regiment nearly reached its D-plus-one objectives when the day ended.

Less fortunate, the Corps Franc d'Afrique was held up by resistance at Hill 107. On the following day the Corps, with the aid and support of self-propelled 105's from the 62nd F.A. Battalion was able to seize this point.

It was on this day as well that the 60th's 2nd Battalion (Major "Black Mike" Kauffman) led the regiment's drive upon Djebel Dardyss. Impeded by the steep hills and dense undergrowth the 2nd faced an almost impossible task. At times the nature of the vegetation made necessary the men's crawling on their hands and knees. Nevertheless, the battle-scarred battalion fought its way to the top. Once on the summit, however, it was subjected to a counterattack by a superior number of enemy infantry, supported by artillery. The battalion was hit from all sides for over four hours. Ferocious opposition by the 2nd, in the form of rifle and machine-gun fire, struck back and repulsed the enemy time after time. The 60th Regiment later advanced over this battlefield and counted 116 enemy dead.

Distinguished Unit Citation

The *2d Battalion, 60th Infantry,* is cited for extraordinary heroism in the face of the enemy during the period 23 and 24 April 1943. This battalion formed the spearhead of an attack on 23 April against the Germans in the vicinity of the Sedjenane Valley, taking its first objective, Djebel Mrata, in an advance over densely wooded mountainous terrain, sooner than anticipated. Upon occupation of Djebel Mrata it became obvious that this position was of temporary importance because it was dominated by Djebel Dardys (sic), a higher ridge overlooking all terrain features in the vicinity. The battalion organized, pushed forward, and took the second position. On the morning of 24 April the Germans counterattacked with a force estimated at two battalions of infantry supported by artillery. The position defended was of considerable size and more than would normally be allotted for defense to a battalion. The attack lasted from 0800 to 1200, during which time the enemy made assaults from practically every direction. Fierce resistance and local counterattacks after the enemy had penetrated the position prevented him from gaining a foothold, and he retired leaving 116 dead, 48 wounded, and prisoners within the position. In this action the *2d Battalion* lost 21 dead and 111 wounded. The gallant and intrepid conduct of this entire battalion afforded a great tactical advantage in seizing and holding dominating terrain and assisted the advance of our forces culminating in the defeat of German arms in North Africa.

As the battle ended, some "Go-Devils" learned for the first time that "Molotov" (Pvt. Karl Warner) the regiment's "Paul Bunyan" had been killed while on patrol with the French. "Molotov" was without visible fear and had a faculty for breaking regulations. Facts about "Molly" are legendary: he was a big-time gambler . . . had a huge desert tent and Arab servants . . . dressed like an officer . . . was seldom seen without his prized French field glasses . . . credited with the capture and destruction of hundreds of Axis troops . . . an excellent forward observer . . . eager for danger and excitement . . . hated, admired and tolerated by everyone. Warner died as he lived . . . "beating the rap" on a court martial and obtaining a medal for heroism. That was the heralded "one-man army of Tunisia" . . . known simply on records as "Molotov."

After Djebel Dardyss was captured the 60th C.T. and the Corps Franc rested in place for a day while more supplies and ammunition were brought up laboriously. Then, on the following day it became obvious that the French were "not sufficiently powerful" to keep up with the advance of the 60th to the eastern exit of the valley. General Eddy decided to have the *Go-Devils* take over a larger sector and so the 60th expanded to the north while the 47th and 39th zones were widened correspondingly. Following this change, the *Go-Devils* pointed into a new direction, moving northeast with the mission of "assisting" the Corps Franc to outflank Ac es Zapa and Djebel Touro from the south.

Meanwhile, the Division G-2 (Intelligence) received a prisoner of war interrogation report which told of strong Axis forces on Djebel Cheniti. These later proved to be true, with the *Go-Devils* storming the position.

* * * *

BRUSH and briar obstacles were flushed of the enemy as the jungle became ever-tighter. By April 28th, the 60th had reached impenetrable vegetation, and supplies were lagging behind. To the east were the dominating terrain features which formed the regiment's objective . . . notably Kef en Nsour, the last great obstacle before the Tunis Plain. Yet despite this juicy plum to its front, the 60th had to have a route which was reasonably passable or become isolated.

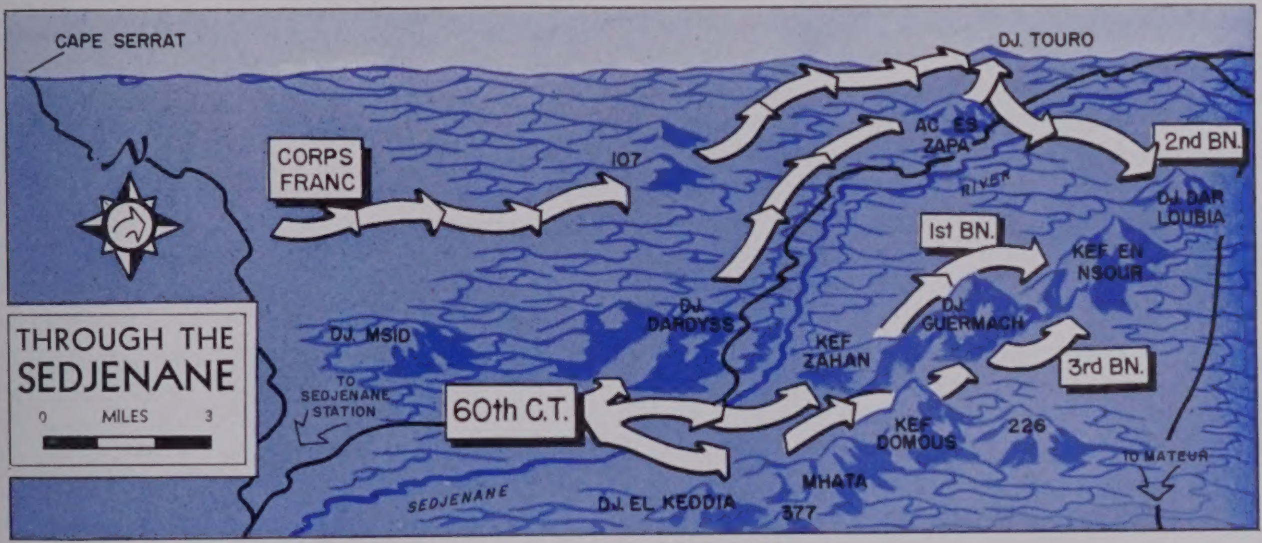
Supplies are the key to operational success. So for one day logistical figures outweighed tactical decisions. A reasonably passable road lay along the Sedjenane Valley and although use of this meant sidetracking the capture of commanding terrain to the east, the 60th changed direction and moved to the northeast. Here astride the river valley, *Go-Devils* could advance with the French troops on their left. Following the capture of Kef Sahan, the regiment, nonetheless, returned its 3rd Battalion to brush and briar tactics.

This was for a good reason. It had become apparent that the Germans had both excellent and dominant observation from the east upon the 60th's zone of advance. Had he retained this high ground, the enemy could have stopped the regiment cold. While the 3rd Battalion hoped to reach Kef en Nsour by the night of April 29th, events turned out—as they so often did in North Africa—to be a battle against both the enemy and nature. There were times when man-high brush aided the concealment of troops, but this meant tougher going on foot. Vegetation and steepness made advance tedious and slow; and two days was not an uncommon period for advancing one mile. Supplies followed by hand carriers and burros. Fortunately, German resistance was not too pronounced; only the restricted passage stopped the 3rd Battalion from sitting upon Kef en Nsour. It took weary doughboys three days to climb to the top.

Although the 3rd Battalion was encountering difficulties with nature in its drive on Kef en Nsour, the 1st Battalion was able to capture Djebel Guermach on April 30th without too much trouble . . . and it prepared to assist the terrain-battling 3rd to the east. Simultaneously, the 2nd Battalion moved to the northeast and was now abreast of the Corps Franc . . . ready to help the French seize high ground at the eastern end of the valley.

* * * *

AS THE 60th pushed northeast and the 39th went almost due east, the inevitable happened; a gap of some four miles developed between the two regiments. It was conceivable that the enemy might counterattack through this opening to relieve pressure on his main positions. Therefore, a special force was dispatched to patrol this area. It consisted of a light tank company from the 91st Reconnaissance



Squadron, dismounted elements of the Ninth Recon Troop, and the 894th and 601st Tank Destroyer Battalions. The 91st men guarded the road south of Djebel Mhata while the remainder of the soldiers covered positions on the Djebel, itself.

> *By 2 May, in the northern sector, the enemy faced the fact that his strongest positions were lost or outflanked. The 9th Division had helped make inevitable the German retreat to the east.*
>
> —*To Bizerte with the II Corps*

When May 2nd dawned, the 39th was both reorganizing and preparing to move while the 47th had reached the commanding heights of Green and Bald Hills in the wake of an enemy evacuation toward Mateur. General Bradley instructed the Ninth to conduct a vigorous pursuit to the northeast, leaving one regiment to guard the southern approaches as the speedy advance got under way. Enemy materiel and equipment cluttered the path of the Ninth, and it was scooped gingerly into the swelling coffers of the victorious Allies. Here was evidence, indeed, of a hasty enemy retreat.

The *Go-Devils* in the northern sector had seized their strongpoint objectives of Ac es Zapa and Kef en Nsour coincident with the Ninth's southern flank successes. These captures spelled the downfall of Kef les Sba and Djebel Touro and cleared the way for the Corps Franc to advance on Djebel Cheniti. The French took quick advantage of the situation. Generally speaking, the commanding ground before Bizerte's last defenses now was held by the Ninth.

Patrolling to the south, the 39th was soon to become attached to the 1st Infantry Division and later the 1st Armored. The rest of the Division continued its advance . . . pushing forward rapidly. A well-rested 2nd Battalion of the 47th led the *Raiders* in a sweeping motor movement north through the 60th Infantry zone, as the entire Ninth line moved ahead.

A May 4th recapitulation of the advance made by the Ninth Division showed that twelve miles had been made in thirteen days over almost impassable terrain. Large stores of equipment and materiel had been captured, as well as 815 prisoners and *all* objectives. Green and Bald Hills were no longer Allied stumbling blocks, the road junction west of Lake Achkel felt the heels of the Ninth's tired soldiers, and one last ring of rugged djebels was all which halted the Ninth from attaining its final goal. The long-awaited Axis explosion out of Tunisia was closer than ever!

At this time, the 47th Infantry was about seven miles west of Garaet Achkel and preparing to drive east. The French were stopped cold before well-defended Djebel Cheniti. As for the 60th C.T., its 2nd Battalion was gaining a position on Dar Loubia while the remainder of the regiment was assembled near the exit of Sedjenane Valley. Southward, the 39th C.T., with the 601st T.D. Battalion attached was getting ready to capture the main road junction to the east and reconnoiter toward Mateur. The Ninth and 91st Recon outfits stayed in place, guarding the gaps. Divarty, less the 26th F.A., moved forward toward the exit of the valley. The stage was set for phase two . . . *on to Bizerte!*

* * * *

THE fight at Djebel Cheniti accurately can be termed a battle for a *bottleneck*. The Ninth was on a *peninsula*, with the Mediterranean to the north and Garaet Achkel to the south. To the right flank was Djebel Cheniti, one mile from the enormous lake obstacle. Faced with laborious effort and narrow operating room, the Division needed ingenuity and fortitude to succeed. There was but one road leading east from the valley. No movement could be made south of the road, for blocking that route was Garaet Achkel. From the Mediterannean Sea to the road were formidable hill fortresses, ending at Djebel Cheniti. These were well defended by a fanatical enemy in his last ditch fight; furthermore, the foe had blown the only bridge over the Oued Douimiss . . . and so that road was not passable for wheeled vehicles. Even had the Ninth been able to move along the road under the fire from Djebel Cheniti, it would have been stopped at the destroyed Douimiss River bridge.

Thus the Division was placed in the unenviable position of having to fight across an eight-mile-wide isthmus, having but one highway on the lake flank and with the enemy astride one of his most formidable positions in the II Corps Zone. Since the

Axis looked down onto the advancing infantry, the enemy was in command of the bottleneck.

Flanking had proved a great success in Jefna and General Eddy decided upon a somewhat similar procedure for breaking the narrow front. Frontal assault (initially) seemed to indicate unnecessary slaughter; however, by going north of Djebel Cheniti the Ninth might execute another Green-Bald maneuver, then break through to Bizerte.

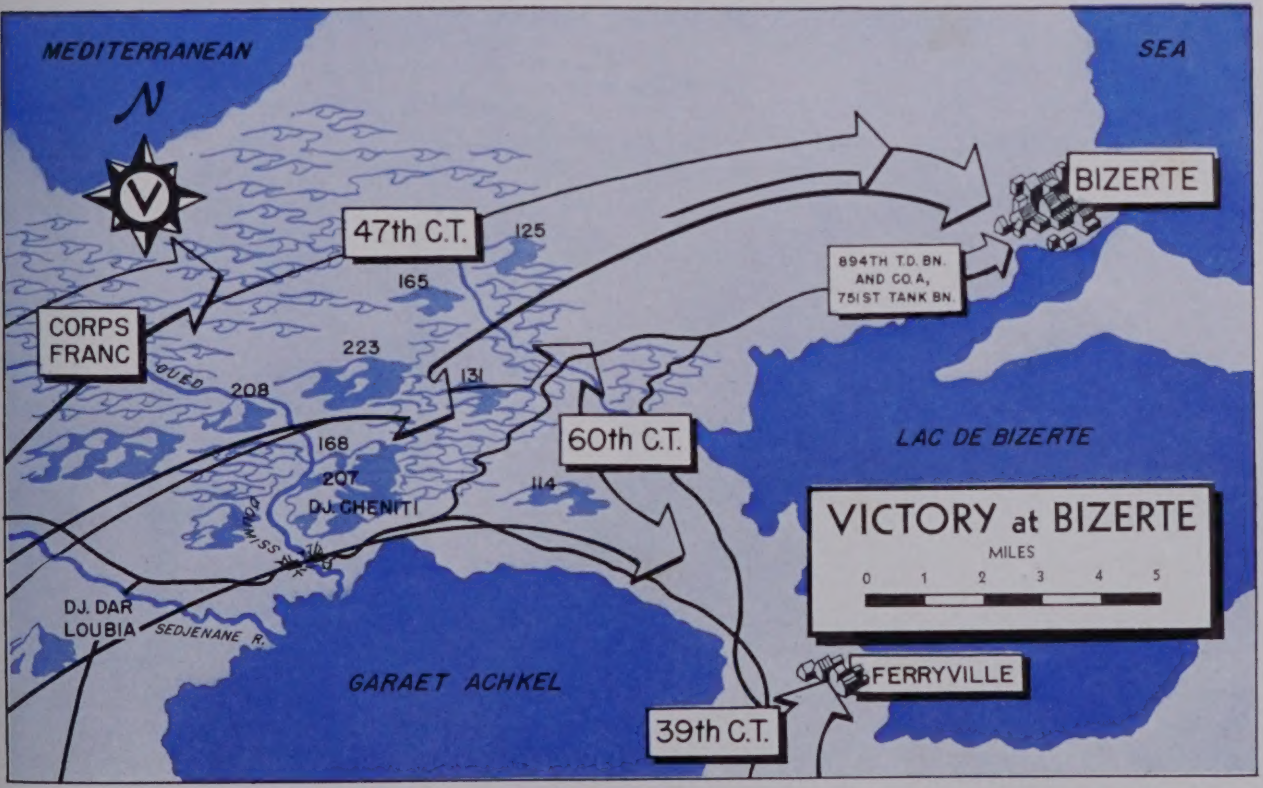
This much was known, the Division would have to obtain elbow room. That meant driving the enemy from the hills north of Cheniti as well as from that dominant position. The plan evolved called for the 60th to hold the enemy at Cheniti while the 47th worked around, gaining high ground and eventually outflanking the defenses.

Such a plan necessitated the engineers constructing a new road to the northeast. Over this highway, artillery could displace and supplies could move forward with the attack. Here was the beginning of a master plan which was used many times later with great success.

Early on the morning of May 5th, the 47th C.T. began the final battle of its North African career—objective Bizerte. Intermediate missions were the jungle-like hills to the east, one of which was many yards higher than Djebel Cheniti and thus offered dominating observation. Soon after the attack had begun the 3rd Battalion radioed that it was one mile from its morning objective. Ten minutes later, however, the battalion was pinned down by small-arms, machine-gun and light artillery fire. At 1:30 P.M. the situation began to change. Although the 3rd was stopped, Colonel Randle ordered a general advance. The 2nd Battalion took Hill 223 and pushed on. By nightfall the *Raiders* had advanced almost far enough for a direct assoult on Cheniti to begin.

Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion of the 60th effected relief of the Corps Franc troops west of Cheniti; and, by the morning of May 6th, the 1st had reconnoitered thoroughly and found position areas for the regiment's supporting weapons.

American flanking tactics once more had caught he enemy off balance. Attacking and enveloping *Raiders* had progressed so well that by the noon of May 6th it was decided to launch the direct assault



VICTORY at BIZERTE

on Djebel Cheniti. So began the famous *leaning up against artillery* by the 1st Battalion of the 60th.

Not long after noon, the 1st—following withering artillery concentrations at 100 yards or less—began an assault on the western slopes of Cheniti with bayonets. This was a dramatic drive, one which carried the *Go-Devils* against the two main heights of Cheniti—Hills 207 and 168. Doughs pushed steadily upward and by dusk were holding Hill 168 and the saddle between that hill and Hill 207. One of the strongest positions in the final Axis defense thus was being assaulted by one battalion of infantry—with artillery blasting a shell-strewn pathway for its advance. This combination rose from the lowlands and began to hack another niche into the annals of foot soldiers who do the *dirty* tasks of warfare.

May 6, 1943, was a slippery, muddy, rainy day and the going was rough for the 47th. As the *Raider* 2nd Battalion approached its objective—Hill 223—an enemy machine-gun nest chattered away at the right flank of the forward C.P. This held up the advance until an anti-tank squad, under Second Lieutenant Louis M. Russo, Jr. wiped out the six well-emplaced guns. The enemy crews took off wildly for Bizerte. And that rather well describes the actions all along the line.

The charges of Hitler and Mussolini were in headlong retreat and the entire Ninth Division was on the move to catch them. Men of the 47th C.T. trod ever eastward, capturing their line of objectives in a two-pronged drive. The gallant but tired 1st Battalion of the 60th Regiment completed its organization of Djebel Cheniti and now was moving to the eastern edge of the ridge. The *Go-Devil* 3rd Battalion also was on the prowl. It had worked east along the southern slopes of the djebel and then crossed the highway to the south, reaching Hill 114 without opposition. Now that Djebel Cheniti was in American hands, the destruction done to the bridge over the Oued Douimiss was repaired by the 15th Engineer Battalion.

Company *A* of the 751st Tank Battalion and the 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion were able to use the structure just before noon, as armor began moving east and thence north under Division orders. Meanwhile, the Ninth Recon Troop rolled east along Route No. 11 to Bizerte. A mine field hindered its path at

BIZERTE WAS IN RUINS

JOURNEY'S END

the road junction near the center of the north shore but this was removed and the troopers drove on.

* * * *

THINGS happened at a rapid pace on May 7th. The 39th C.T., attached to the 1st Armored Division for operations against Mateur, shortly was to enter Ferryville. Mid-afternoon information from a British *Phantom* Patrol indicated that the enemy was evacuating Bizerte. Since the Axis had withdrawn from the Ninth Division front, the signal was given to push on.

There are many stories regarding the first entry of Allied troops into Bizerte. Official records tell the tale as colorfully as any.

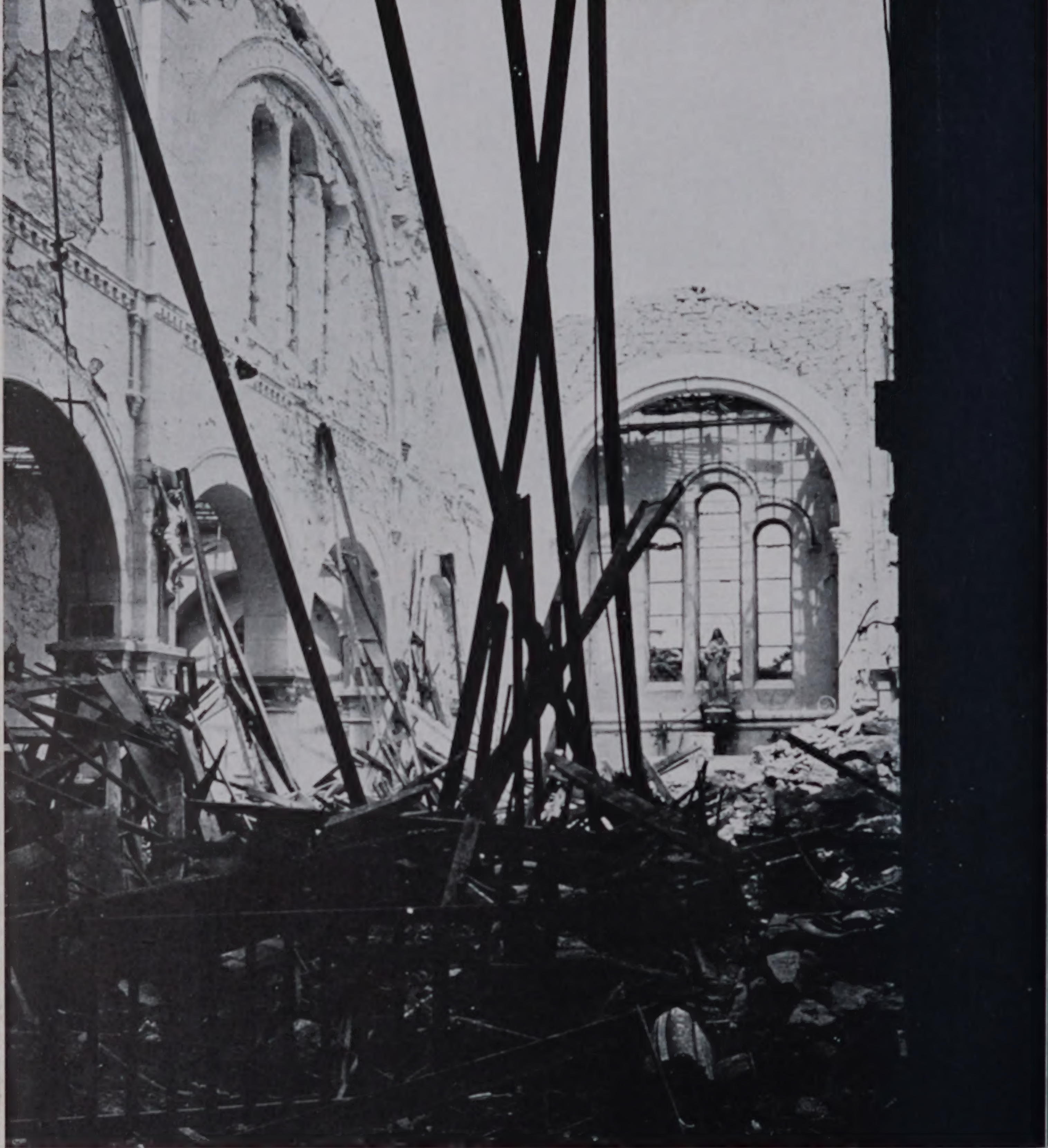
It was about three o'clock in the afternoon of May 7th as Lt. Colonel Charlie P. Eastburn's 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion was grinding toward the city. The enemy apparently had fled and Colonel Eastburn wanted his outfit to enter Bizerte first. He radioed back to Division and contacted Lt. Colonel Alvar Sundin, the G-3. Said Colonel Eastburn: "Have covered the entire Valley of the Oued Garba. No sign of enemy in valley. Believe way to Bizerte wide open. Request permission to proceed into Bizerte and occupy city."

"Proceed to Bizerte and occupy it. Report position every half hour," replied Colonel Sundin.

"Will comply with pleasure!"

And so the objective of II Corps, one of the two major ports of Northern Tunisia, was the next stop for the 894th and Company *A* of the 751st Tank Battalion. This mechanized force was ordered into Bizerte at 3:30 P.M. As the vehicles probed forward, snipers popped-off from buildings, and artillery poured down from across the channel. It was a bit unhealthy to stay the night there, so the armor withdrew in total darkness toward the airport where they snatched a well-earned forty winks.

Some infantrymen riding on top of the tanks had come along with the armor. Snipers, time bombs, booby traps and mines were in all important Bizerte buildings. Typical of the forward observers who entered the city with the leading elements was Second Lieutenant (Captain) Orion C. Shockley of the 47th Cannon Company. He entered the objective on a leading vehicle ahead of the infantry and set up operations on the roof of *Hotel de la Marine*. There Shockley observed enemy batteries firing on the *Raider* regiment during the morning of the 8th. He directed fire from his cannon company against these



guns and the cannoneers knocked out four 88's, two 20mm anti-aircraft guns and a mounted 20mm machine gun.

The 47th had assembled on the high ground northwest of Bizerte during the night of May 7-8. Major (Lt. Colonel) Johnston's 2nd Battalion entered the port from these heights on the 8th as the first unit of Allied infantrymen to enter the city. For political reasons (in order to allow the French to be the first to enter Bizerte), a battalion of the Corps Franc had been taken from reserve and placed to the left of the 47th. Although the 47th began entering first, the combat team was withdrawn and the French were allowed to mop up remaining resistance. This gesture allowed the French to take a major step in the liberation of their home land.

Rumor piled upon rumor as the day ended. There was every indication that the large force of Germans who were trapped on the peninsula south of Bizerte might try to escape over the channel into the city and flee to friendly soil. A special task force was formed to act as a foil, but the enemy did not attempt the crossing.

Then on May 9, 1943, the enemy surrendered in the II Corps zone and only scattered Axis units remained to offer resistance. The final explosion of the spark came on May 13th, when the balance of the enemy capitulated to the British on the Cape Bon Peninsula. The Axis was done in Tunisia . . . it was finished for good, and Hitler's finest *herrenvolk* had bit the dust in defeat.

* * * *

AFTER May 9th, the Ninth Infantry Division was busy with a new type of duty . . . guarding prisoners . . . and had patrols out to bring in stragglers. There soon were 25,000 P.W.'s in the massive II Corps cages, including General Jurgin von Arnim, the German supreme commander. An arrogant enemy army was getting a taste of its own medicine!

Repair work began in earnest on battered and deserted Bizerte, too. The job of clearing the city fell mainly to the 15th Engineer Combat Battalion. Engineers had done superb work all during the Tunisian campaign; they had built 70 miles of double-way roads during the northern campaign, along with the repairing of 126 miles of other road. Many bridges were back in use, thanks to the 15th, and the battalion had constructed mountain trails to evacuate the wounded. Engineers were instrumental in keeping all supplies rolling forward. Now mines, rubble and repair in Bizerte took their attention. The port was partly destroyed and it seemed as if a hurricane had hit the city, bursting watermains and other utilities. Aided by clear weather the sweating engineers performed another monumental job.

Meanwhile, hot showers were in order for the 47th C.T. at the French Marine Barracks. And there was rest, replacement, story-swapping and all sorts of congratulations for the Ninth Division on its professional wind-up of the campaign. Best remembered of these commendations is a terse message from the Corps commander, General Bradley:

"During the recent operations which began on April 23rd and ended on May 9th, the work of the 9th Infantry Division has been most commendable. The Division was faced with a wide sector, which was extremely rugged and largely covered with an almost impenetrable growth of vegetation. In spite of the tremendous handicaps confronting the Division, it pushed ahead, overcoming every obstacle. Its efforts were rewarded by the capture of Bizerte. The Division is to be congratulated on its brilliant performance."

If any doubt ever had existed regarding the Ninth's combat ability, it now was dispelled forever. Unquestionably the Division had come of age. And while it received a short rest, pending a new and as yet unannounced campaign, the policing-up and prisoner-guarding continued. Simultaneously, the Ninth took stock of itself.

The Allied High Command did the same thing and came up with a most pleasing report. Implications were that the Allies had won their first clear-cut

A PORTION OF MATEUR P.W.'s CAGES

victory over the Axis since the beginning of the war; moreover, an entire continent had been freed of the aggressors. Pressure on embattled Russia had lessened and the victory at Stalingrad was greatly assisted, if not made possible, by the engaging of several hundred thousand Axis troops in North Africa.

In addition, a complete Axis army had been destroyed, while the Allies gained valuable experience in coordination and fighting. Most important of all, however, the threatened enemy domination of the world had failed . . . failed miserably and completely on the battlefields of Tunisia. Hitler and Mussolini now were on the defensive—permanently. They did not know where or when the Allied spearheads would strike next. Air, sea and now land supremacy had been wrested from a veteran foe. Hope and victory had been won in the desert!

* * * *

Other divisions after the end of the African campaign went back to bivouacs near Oran or Algiers, but they sent the Ninth to Magenta, 80 kilometers south of Sidi bel Abbes in the direction of the Sahara Desert.

—Hal Boyle (AP)

SOUTH of the French Foreign Legion Headquarters town of Sidi bel Abbes lies Magenta, Algeria . . . known for its flies, intense heat, manure, choking dust and lack of things modern. Magenta is a part of the *Little Sahara Desert* and was soon to become the home of the Ninth Division for seven long weeks.

Following its brief stay in Bizerte and vicinity, the men of the *Octofoil* packed their belongings and rolled west over the same route which had brought them into Tunisia. Final destination proved to be Magenta, where the Division arrived in late May. What started to be a fairly nice trip had ended in a somewhat disgusting finish. However, the weary soldiers made the best of a bad bargain and soon the area grew into a well-laid-out bivouac.

Passes were issued to Sidi bel Abbes by quota, and GIs were trucked in by day and returned back at night. Nighttime was most pleasant, for the temperature cooled appreciably during the hours of darkness—insuring perfect slumber. But heat during the day was overwhelming and forced the Division to issue an order that siestas would be taken by all personnel from 1-3 P.M. daily.

But all was not rest and passes. There was a future battle to condition for, and the job of training occupied much of everyone's time. The Ninthmen had set up camp around May 26th and by June 27th most of the troops had consumed their fill of drills, reveille, inspections, parades and marrow-stretching calisthenics. On the other hand, there was some pleasure as well. An occasional movie or musical show offered welcome relaxation and there was swimming for a few at the beach at Ain el Turck, which was close to Oran. Medics received little rest, however, since the aid men had their hands full with malaria and dysentery, the latter caused by the lack of sanitary facilities and the filth of the surrounding area.

As welcome a diversion as any was the training of units of the French Foreign Legion by various outfits of the Ninth. A great deal of friendship developed between the Ninth Division and many of its allies at Sidi bel Abbes. The be-medalled and be-ribboned Legionnaires claimed that *Beau Geste* actually had existed and had other stories for those Americans who could converse in French. But for all that, Sidi bel Abbes had little to offer after one visit.

* * * *

DURING the lull between battles, several changes in command occurred within the framework of the Ninth Division. On June 1st General Irwin, the Ninth's brilliant artillery commander, received his second star and soon departed for another command. He was replaced by Brigadier General Reece M. Howell, a familiar figure to the Ninth for several years past. Colonel Randle was promoted to Brigadier General and returned to the States. Colonel (Brigadier General) George W. Smythe, erstwhile all-American football star, assumed command of the 47th Infantry Regiment.

Meanwhile, units of the Ninth Infantry Division participated in a review held in honor of King George VI of Great Britain and many British dignitaries at La Senia Airport near Oran. His Majesty's guard of honor was the 2nd Battalion of the 47th Infantry. On June 14th, General Mark W. Clark, commanding the Fifth Army, presented the 2nd's Major Johnston to the King as "the commanding officer of the crack battalion of the crack regiment of the crack Ninth Infantry Division." After that introduction Major Johnston and the King conversed regarding the battle for Bizerte. The British monarch also commented on the neat and soldierly appearance of the Ninth's soldiers after combat . . . a point noticed by many others.

Oran was a grand change but the men had to return to Magenta, where more training followed. Then General Eddy received word that the Division again would be split up . . . the 39th Combat Team and Division Artillery were to head for Bizerte and prepare for combat. On the 29th, the 39th C.T. (leaving behind its companion 26th F.A.) rolled out, covering the route to Bizerte via Orleansville, L'Arba, Setif and Souk Ahras. Next day Division Artillery motored along the same route . . . taking six days to drive the 910 miles. From Bizerte these units were to embark for another land and another battle—the conquest of Sicily. Not before they had dodged more bombs, however, for while encamped outside Bizerte the 39th Infantry and Divarty were on the receiving end of a jettisoning of bombs. These came from enemy aircraft which had been frustrated in an attempted bombing of Allied vessels in the harbor. Fortunately these were armor-piercing bombs and caused few casualties.

* * * *

MINUS some of its strength, the Division continued its regimen of training and conditioning. Then the call to arms was sounded again and on July 8, 1943, the Ninth packed its dusty equipment and clothing and headed for Ain el Turck. The infantry regiments had to march to the new area on foot and that was a truly rugged journey. In the ever-increasing heat of summer, the 47th and 60th Infantry Regiments trudged on. One day the temperature reached 123 degrees in the shade . . . after that scorcher all marches were made at night.

The new home of the Ninth turned out to be Bou Sfer, a staging area near the beach. There were the usual passes . . . this time to Oran and Ain el Turck, and there was also the perennial training. Bou Sfer was better liked than Magenta, for afternoons spent on the beach and at Oran, furnished more sightseeing and beverage-consuming than did Sidi bel Abbes.

During this time plans were formulated for the Ninth's part in the coming Sicilian conflict and secret orders were issued, assigning the Division its role. Days of rest and training were soon to be over, and the hard grind of battle and the mountain climbing once more were to be the lot of the Ninth. Already units of the Division were facing the enemy in Sicily . . . and the full strength of the Ninth Infantry Division was now to be felt on that island.

Island Victory was in the making . . . *Safari in O.D.* was done!

Section IV Photography Credits: Pages 78, 100, 107 by 39th Infantry; 81, 84, 85, 97, 111, 117, 120 are Official U. S. Army Signal Corps Photos; 83, 86, 106, 116, 118, 123 by 15th Engineers.

MOUNTAINS AND MULES AWAITED THE NINTH ➡

BACON

Section V

Island Victory

SICILY

ENTRANCE to Hitler's *Fortress Europa* by the Allies during the summer of 1943 depended upon a multitude of *ifs* and *ands*. One of these was a chain of stepping stones from which Allied aircraft and shipping could operate against the continent. Another was mastery of the Mediterranean—England's historic *life-line of empire*. Finally, the complex overall future war strategy had to be taken into consideration.

Fortunately for the invaders, Europe's contemporary military masters were unable to ascertain the exact locality of the next Allied blow. The enemy could picture the victors of Bizerte and Tunis striking at any of several widely separated points. From Tunisia it would seem that any projected invasion of southern Europe might follow the natural path—through Sardinia and Corsica, which would then outflank Italy and place the invaders close to France. At least the enemy thought so.

Assaulting Italy from its toe—via Sicily—certainly was more difficult than a flanking maneuver. On the other hand, political considerations augured that the all-too-long regime of Dictator Benito Mussolini was due to topple. This particularly seemed true if the Italian homeland were to face immediate invasion. Furthermore, initial capture of Sardinia and Corsica would have left Sicily as a sore point on the Mediterranean shipping lanes, since Axis planes and submarines would be able to continue using that island as a base.

No matter in which direction an Allied offensive struck, however, forward fighter air strips were necessary if Anglo-American air superiority were to be maintained. Thus directly following their victory in North Africa, the AAF and RAF waged unceasing warfare against Axis airfields and supporting installations. The stepping-stone island of Pantelleria, in the Sicilian Channel, was the recipient of a new kind of combined aerial and naval bombardment. It fell on June 11, 1943, when its 11,000 troops surrendered to Allied *persuasion* from the sky . . . the first recorded island to be captured by air assault alone. In rapid succession Lampedusa and Linosa islands similarly were bombarded and captured. An uneasy enemy was unable to fathom the next aggressive move of the Allies and became obliged to spread his forces over a wider area. Just as the foe had been tricked prior to the North African landings, he now was being bewildered by this new strategy.

Actually, the choice of Sicily as a springboard to the Italian mainland had been made during the famed Casablanca conference of January 1943. And while the enemy had delayed the execution of this plan for several months by his dogged Tunisian stand, he had been weakened considerably in the process. Staving off defeat in Africa had been like pouring good troops and materiel down the military drain. Now the Axis was faced with widely extended lines and insufficient manpower to halt a concentrated invasion in any one locality.

* * * *

SICILY is an island which is separated from the *toe* of Italy by the narrow Straits of Messina. In size it is roughly as large as New Jersey . . . with 500 miles of curving coastline to guard against invasion. Several fine ports dot these shores—among them, Palermo, Catania, Marsala, Siracuse and Messina. Although the island is mainly mountainous, there is one large plain—Catania—which sits at the

> . . . . The ability of the Division to push forward, in some cases over rough terrain where roads were non-existent, hurried the final results.
>
> —Lt. General (General) Omar N. Bradley

foot of Monte (Mount) Etna. Largest and most renowned of the island's many towering promontories is this ever-smoldering, volcanic Monte Etna—which measures 400 square miles at its base and rises two miles skyward. Etna is visible from most of the island and was an important factor in planning the campaign. In the northeast portion of Sicily are its roughest ranges . . . these are reached mostly by a few narrow, precipitous highways and mule trails: trails and roads which can be blocked by a single roadblock or mine field.

In choosing a proper beachhead area, the Allied high command took into consideration that it must confuse the defenders as to any intended points of invasion. This deception was to be followed by an assault in force within an extremely small sector, thus lessening the possibility that the spearheading units would be chopped to pieces because of separation. The newly formed U.S. Seventh Army (General Patton) and the veteran British Eighth Army, therefore, were given small zones of advance, connected flanks and coordinated objectives. American assault teams were to land in the vicinities of Licata, Gela and Scoglitti; British beachheads were mainly around Cape Passero, Avola, Siracuse. Naval diversion was to be furnished at the northwestern end of Sicily and in the Ionian Sea.

Since modern warfare depends upon air support to a great extent, the initial objectives of the landings were enemy airfields. Relying strongly on airpower for softening up the island, the invasion planners ordered the entire operation preceded by a tremendous air attack. Then during the night of July 9, 1943, one of history's greatest armadas converged upon Sicily. It struck at 2:30 the following morning.

The awesome and flashing naval bombardment which further softened up the beaches stunned the enemy. Soon landing craft had effected the journey ashore and the invasion began. Generally speaking, the initial assault waves were more than successful. They encountered but scattered opposition, and only after the first day were they subjected to heavy armored and infantry counterattacks. By July 15th almost one-third of Sicily was in Allied hands. The foothold phase was completed.

Original plans of the 15th Army Group had been to move the Eighth Army up the coast to cut off any Axis escape via Messina. Simultaneously the Seventh Army was to flank and split the foe. Because of increased German and Italian pressure in the British sector, however, this scheme was altered. Now the Americans were to attack west and north, capturing the western half of Sicily while the British drove north around both sides of Monte Etna and seized Messina.

It was in the execution of this plan that the Seventh Army took away the initiative from its British comrades-in-arms. A stonewall of resistance met the Eighth, while the American Provisional Corps of Major General (Lt. General) Geoffrey Keyes speedily moved west and north, overrunning everything in its path—including Palermo. At the same time General Bradley's II Corps drove north, protecting the Provisional Corps right flank and reaching the sea as well.

Involved in this phase to isolate Western Sicily were the 39th Combat Team and the Ninth Division Artillery. Their roles were both important and—in the case of the *Falcons*—decisive ones.

Just prior to noon on July 14th the 39th C.T. (34th F.A. Bn. attached) left Bizerte—bound for the Licata-Gela beachhead. Gela was reached on the following day and the combat team immediately went into reserve—cleaning equipment and preparing for the battle everyone knew would come.

Combat was not long delayed. From July 17-24, the team was attached to the 82nd Airborne Division. Together they pushed from Licata to Marsala—sparking the offensive which cut off the enemy in the west. Opposition encountered throughout this initial drive was not as pronounced as it had been in Tunisia, and the 39th beat a steady path forward—through Agrigento, Ribera, Menfi, Castelvetrano, Mazara and Marsala.

Action started on the 17th, when the *Falcons* captured 327 prisoners near Agrigento. In rapid succession the combat team smashed through town after town. One of the few stumbling blocks encountered was Castelvetrano. It was here that Lt. Colonel

SICILY'S COASTLINE WAS PICTURESQUE

(Colonel) Van H. Bond personally led the 3rd Battalion across the Belice River in a difficult early morning crossing; and in full view of enemy batteries directed artillery fire on the Axis positions. Meanwhile, the 3rd battled into Castelvetrano at 10 A.M. and had that town organized by noon. Because of this victory the U.S. 2nd Armored Division was able to attack north and capture Palermo, and that gave the Allies possession of the whole western and southwestern portions of the island.

Concurrent with the seizure of Castelvetrano on July 21st, the 1st Battalion was pressing forward in its zone. Despite the approach of evening the doughs trudged onward. Slightly after six o'clock they had occupied Campobello, and then came the prize catch of the Sicilian campaign. Entering Mazara at 9:16 P.M., the battalion captured *3,456 Italians* . . . more than the entire strength of the 39th Infantry Regiment!

But this huge snag of prisoners failed to halt the advance. Under the direction of Lt. Colonel John J Toffey, Jr. (who had assumed temporary command after Colonel Ritter became injured) the 39th moved on Marsala. Marsala was taken on July 24th, after American artillery had rendered the enemy's positions untenable. The inevitable policing-up of hold-outs followed and the combat team stood ready for its next move.

Nearby, at Trapini were the veteran 155 cannoneers of the 34th Field Artillery, who had been detached from the 39th C.T. at Agrigento and attached to the 82nd Airborne Division. Through Ribera, San Margarita and finally into the important Axis port of Trapini, the big guns of the 34th blasted the way for the 82nd—in "workmanlike fashion" according to 82nd Divarty commander, Brigadier General Maxwell D. Taylor. Numerous enemy artillery batteries defending Trapini were silenced rapidly by the deadly *time* fire of these skilled 34th artillerymen, thus enabling the paratroopers to capture that city with little difficulty.

* * * *

NINTH Divarty, meanwhile, had departed from Bizarte on July 21st and debarked at Licata the following day. The artillerymen remained under II Corps control, minus of course their 26th and 34th Battalions, which were supporting the *Falcons* and

82nd Airborne. Action was not long in catching up with the artillery; for within a few days the 60th and 84th Battalions were in support of the 1st Division at Enna. Concurrently, the 34th returned to Divarty control.

Artillery seldom is mentioned in reporting a battle . . . although few engagements ever could succeed without such supporting units. The Ninth Division Artillery was one of the biggest single factors in the Division's long string of successes.

Most artillerymen in this organization hailed from the New England area and many spoke with a Boston accent. All had a New Englander's love of his own particular locality. For this reason, the soldiers fitted together into somewhat a more harmonious pattern than did most Army units.

The Divarty men were proud, too. They were proud of their record at Thala and proud of their rapid firing, which had been termed *automatic artillery* by the enemy. Most of all, they were proud of their chaplains. Other units had equally fine *sky pilots* during the war—their Andrysiak, DeLaura, Tepper, Propst, Ray and others. With the artillerymen it was mostly First Lieutenant (Captain) Edward T. *Father* Connors, former Holy Cross College footballer. Perhaps an item from *Our Sunday Visitor* written by a combat veteran describes the reason as well as any:

> *Almost a legend, another "soldier saint" to his men, Father Connors is one of the Division's outstanding heroes. Without personal transportation facilities he hitchhiked in the midst of battle, bumming rides on jeeps and trucks. On a flat rock or a jeep, he said daily Mass and usually three on Sunday.*
>
> *At Bizerte, in the Tunisian campaign, enemy shells fell in a service battery, exploding two ammunition trailers. Father Connors ran to the scene and in the midst of a flaming inferno dragged out the wounded, returning several times while shells were exploding to see that no men were left. For this heroism he wears the Silver Star.*

* * * *

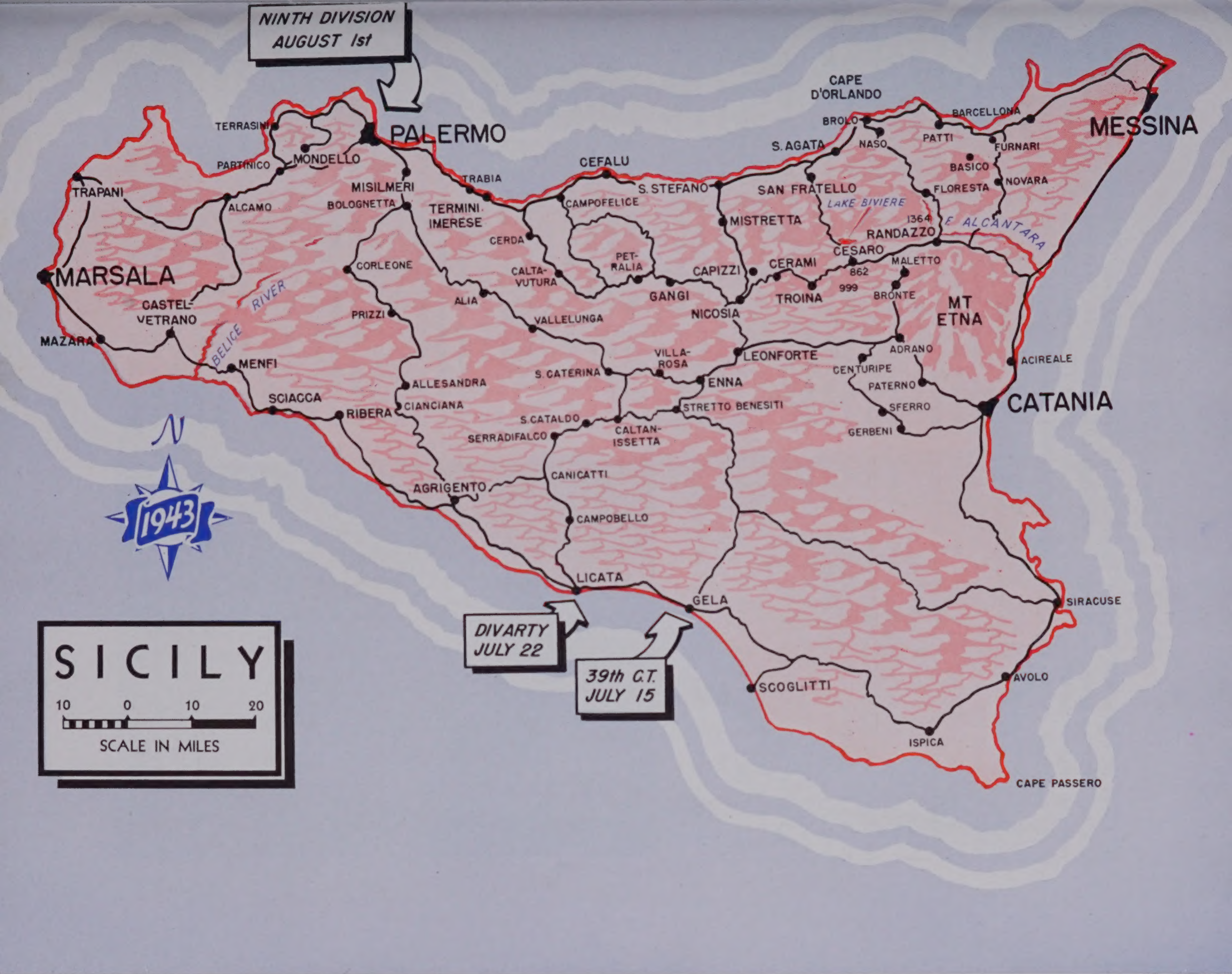
THE disintegration of the Italian Army in Sicily had far-reaching consequences. Mussolini was deposed on July 25th, and after that date it became evident that the entire Axis line of defense was turning—concentrating on a delaying defensive in the rugged northeastern mountain area. II Corps wheeled to face the enemy and the Provisional Corps assumed a role of occupation and military government. In order to facilitate the American advance, the 39th C.T. was placed at the disposal of General Bradley; and he ordered it on line alongside the 1st Infantry Division.

That called for more travel. From Marsala the *Falcons* and their attachments began a shuttle movement over narrow gravel roads to the vicinity of Nicosia. When the 39th completed its trek to the 1st Division zone, it received a commendation from General Keyes, its recent Corps commander:

> ". . . . Attached first to the 82nd Airborne, and then to form the basic unit of Task Force "X" which was given the important mission of capturing Castelvetrano and then Marsala to permit the execution of the main maneuver for the capture of Palermo, you accomplished each mission on schedule and contributed your full share toward the success of the operation."

Even as this letter was being distributed down to company level, the 39th was positioning itself near Leonforte under enemy shelling. It was around this time that the almost legendary Colonel H. A. *Paddy* Flint took command of the regiment.

It was under *Paddy* Flint and alongside the 1st Division that the combat team met the test of greatness. In order to forestall any invasion on the Italian mainland, German strategists had moved their forces into a line of positions which were every bit as impenetrable as those in Northern Tunisia. Two excellently paved highways cut through to the east. One of these was along the sea and the other through the mountains. Each could be shut off by a small determined delaying force and roadblocks, however, and the only other routes were indistinct mule and mountain climber trails . . . hardly the proper pathway for a speedy American advance. Of the two paths to Messina, the one in the central part of the



N
1943
10 0 10 20
SCALE IN MILES
TERRASINI
PALERMO
PARTINICO
MONDELLO
TRAPANI
ALCAMO
MISILMERI
BOLOGNETTA
TRABIA
TERMINI IMERESE
CERDA
MARSALA
CASTELVETRANO
MAZARA
BELICE RIVER
MENFI
SCIACCA
RIBERA
CORLEONE
PRIZZI
ALIA
CALTAVUTURA
VALLELUNGA
ALLESANDRA
CIANCIANA
S. CATERINA
S. CATALDO
SERRADIFALCO
CALTANISSETTA
CANICATTI
AGRIGENTO
CAMPOBELLO
LICATA
GELA
SCOGLITTI
ISPICA
CAPE PASSERO
AVOLO
SIRACUSE
CEFALU
CAMPOFELICE
S. STEFANO
PETRALIA
GANGI
CAPIZZI
NICOSIA
VILLAROSA
ENNA
LEONFORTE
STRETTO BENESITI
MISTRETTA
SAN FRATELLO
LAKE BIVIERE
S. AGATA
CAPE D'ORLANDO
BROLO
NASO
PATTI
BARCELLONA
FURNARI
BASICO
NOVARA
FLORESTA
MESSINA
1364
RANDAZZO
F. ALCANTARA
CESARO
862
CERAMI
999
TROINA
MALETTO
BRONTE
MT ETNA
ADRANO
CENTURIPE
PATERNO
SFERRO
GERBENI
CATANIA
ACIREALE

NINTH DIVISION
AUGUST 1st

DIVARTY
JULY 22

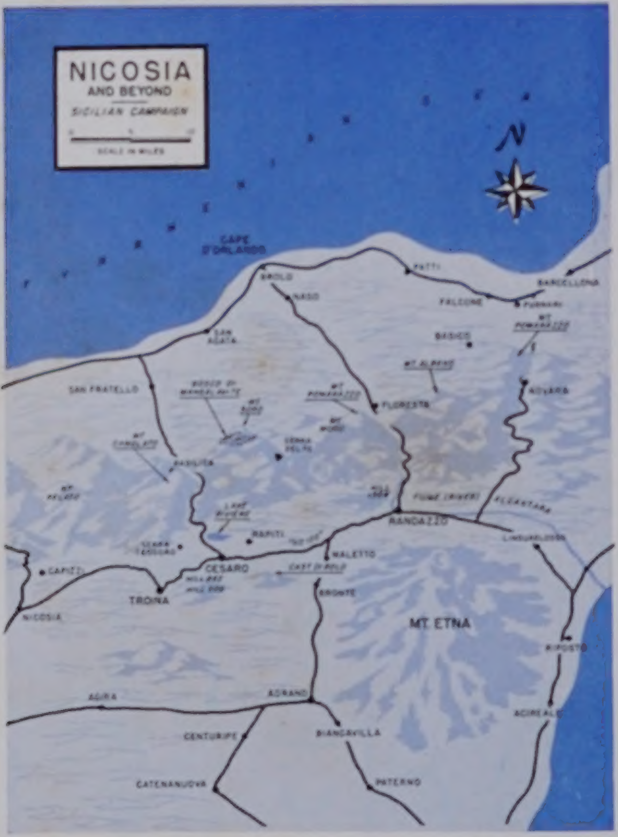
39th C.T.
JULY 15

SICILY

II Corps Zone presented the most formidable obstacle. And once again, the *Falcons* were to fight over the toughest terrain.

By July 30th, the 1st Division was through the town of Nicosia and pushing east. The *Falcons* were moving too. After a brilliant two-day battle, the 39th conquered the enemy at Cerami and its bordering hills. Following this success the regiment turned towards the German strongpoint of Troina . . . a keystone in the enemy's defensive plan.

Troina presented the Americans with a troublesome problem. The hills surrounding the town offered the defending artillery excellent observation posts, and Troina itself was blocked by veteran machine-gun and mortar crews who refused to budge. *Paddy* Flint led his *boys* against this stubborn resistance time and time again. But bravery and determination were of little avail in chopping ahead—and it was before the defenses of Troina that many more names were added to the regiment's expanding list of *outstanding soldiers:* among them, Lt. Colonel Robert E. Cobb, First Sergeant Emmett M. Taylor, First Lieutenant Robert L. Watts, Staff Sergeant Leonard Owens, Technician Fourth Grade Jasper N. Cliburn, and Privates First Class John Carter and Prince O. Reed.


NICOSIA
AND BEYOND
SICILIAN CAMPAIGN
SCALE IN MILES
N
CAPE D'ORLANDO
BROLO
PATTI
NASO
BARCELLONA
FALCONE
FURNARI
BASICO
SAN AGATA
MT ALBANO
SAN FRATELLO
FLORESTA
NOVARA
CESARO
RANDAZZO
FIUME (RIVER)
ALCANTARA
LINGUAGLOSSA
MALETTO
CAPIZZI
TROINA
NICOSIA
BRONTE
MT ETNA
RIPOSTO
AGIRA
ADRANO
ACIREALE
CENTURIPE
BIANCAVILLA
CATENANUOVA
PATERNO

The heights which the regiment had to assault often were three thousand feet in altitude and cost the *Falcons* dearly in loss of personnel. After each of his positions fell the enemy counterattacked fiercely, catching the Americans in the midst of their *second breath*. To complicate matters the foe had blown all bridges, sown mine fields across the adjacent hills and was using every bit of trickery at his command.

Waves of bombers and huge concentrations of artillery were unable to move the Axis on August 4th. Something had to be done and done fast, if II Corps were to advance. Fortunately the Ninth Infantry Division had just arrived at the scene and offered Corps the fresh force with which it could break the enemy's defenses.

At the same time all detached units of the Ninth reverted to Division control, including Divarty and the 39th C.T.—about which Major General Terry Allen, commanding the 1st Infantry Division sent a letter to General Patton on August 6th, regarding the combat team's outstanding performance: ". . . . The 39th Infantry entered the lines and executed a brilliant attack against CERAMI, just west of NICOSIA, on July 29th. It continued in the lines as an integral part of the 1st Infantry Division in the advance of that Division against TROINA, which culminated in the capture of that locality and the destruction of German troops therein. Throughout the latter phase of this operation, the 39th Infantry was given a punishing role to continue the pressure against TROINA from the west, while the 26th Infantry and the 18th Infantry executed flanking movements on the northern and southern flanks.

"The 39th Infantry executed its assigned mission with the utmost efficiency and gallantry. The personal leadership of Colonel H. A. Flint in the close supervision and direction of front line battalions of the 39th Infantry greatly influenced the combat operations of his Regiment. His personal example was

The Man Called *Paddy* Flint

Probably no story of the 39th Combat Team—or, for that matter, of the Ninth Division—could be written properly without including the saga of Colonel Harry A. *Paddy* Flint. Legends and facts often become entangled regarding this famous soldier. Facts alone present as interesting a picture as ever recorded about any fighting soldier.

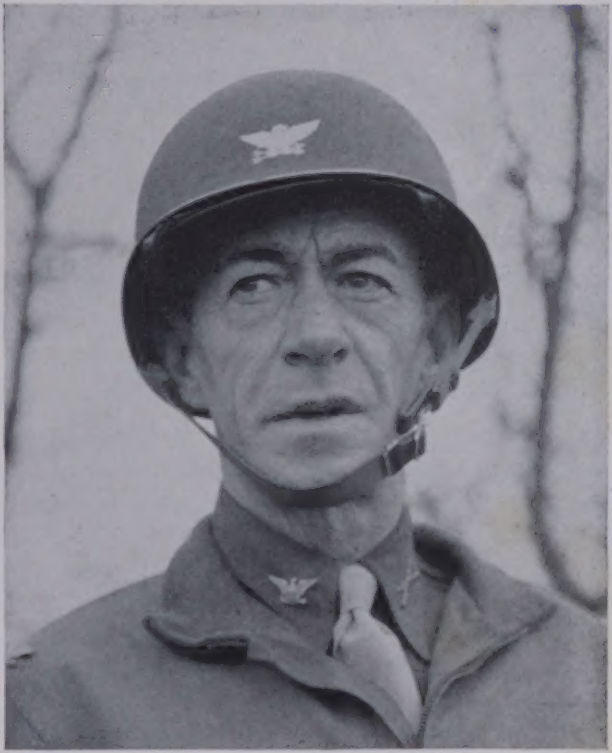
Colonel Flint was an old-time cavalryman who turned infantrymen to take command of the 39th Infantry. Although past the age when most officers lead fighting outfits, *Paddy* was as good and as brave as any man who ever stood on two feet. He was short, had the wit of an Irishman, could swear like nobody's business—when he wanted to—and was seldom seen without his famous black scarf.

When he became commanding officer of the 39th, it was an ordinary regiment—sometimes good, sometimes not so good. Soon a change came over the organization, from the top ranking officer down to the lowliest private. *Paddy* had said, "From now on, we're all one gang. We're going to work and stick together as a gang and help each other."

That is just what happened. It was this little colonel who thought up the idea of the regiment's famed motto—*AAA-O* (*Anything, Anywhere, Anytime, Bar Nothing*). He painted it on the side of his helmet, and so many soldiers followed suit that it became part of the 39th's official uniform.

Confidant of his West Point schoolmate, General Patton, and liked by all, this Vermonter showed that he was *action* and not *words*. A portion of his D.S.C. citation tells this well:

> *. . . Going forward with the attacking battalions, Colonel Flint spent his entire days moving about the squad and platoon installations to cheer and encourage all ranks. During the attack on 4 August 1943 he personally led the advance through enemy fire, waving to his men to follow him forward. He was often covered and obscured from view by dust and smoke from bursting shells, later to be revealed as standing upright and urging the men forward.*



Paddy Flint used to say, "H'it don't make no difference," when things got rough. Upon being awarded the D.S.C., his reaction was, "Why, when I stood up there and heard the citations being read, I didn't know who they were talking about. It was a great deal like Mrs. Murphy at the funeral of her husband, when she said, 'Why, the priest isn't talking about Pat at all.' "

But that *was Paddy* the General was talking about. That was Colonel H. A. *Paddy* Flint, the man whom the 39th would follow through Hell without a canteen of water!

an inspiration to the officers and men of his command."

* * * *

FOLLOWING the capture of Palermo, the Ninth Infantry Division was ordered to proceed from Oran to that port. After July 24th the Division began loading for overseas movement at Bou Sfer. Then on the 28th General Eddy flew to Palermo with an advance party and made ready for the Ninth's arrival. It was on this day as well that the bulk of the Division set sail for the island of Sicily from Mers el Kebir Harbor, aboard twelve vessels. The journey to combat was uneventful until the Ninth arrived in the harbor of Palermo on the night of July 31st. Here it was necessary for the convoy to drop anchor until the following morning and then disembark the troops.

A prize remark during the voyage to Sicily was made by one officer, who stated that: "Tunisia wasn't so bad; where else would you find hot and cold running scorpions in your foxholes?"

Midnight came and August 1st, the Division's third reactivation anniversary, was at hand. As a sort of *birthday present* the enemy sent over some of his bombers, which raided the docks and harbor from 4:15 A.M. until after 6 A.M. During this attack Private Simpson of the Ninth Reconnaissance Troop, aboard the *USAT Evangeline,* manned a gun and shot down an enemy aircraft. This was one of several planes knocked out of the air that morning.

The Ninth disembarked during the hours which followed, moving through Palermo, its Botanical Gardens, then into bivouac east of Palermo, and Misilmeri. Some troops bivouaced near the Palermo waterfront—overlooked by a citadel-type of hotel which was perched upon a high cliff. Abandoned *eighty-eights* were everywhere and the harbor was a shambles. This brief halt was followed by a motorized movement to an area just west of Cerami.

Most of the Division staff had preceded the main body of the Ninth, so as to prepare for the role which the men of the *Octofoil* were to play in Sicily. From the very date of his arrival the Division commander conferred with General Bradley regarding the use of a wide flanking maneuver, since this type of strategy had proved excellent in Northern Tunisia. At first it was believed that the 1st Infantry Division would be able to take Troina, allowing the Ninth to relieve the 1st east of that town on August 5th. If Troina fell, the enemy would be forced to retreat from his San Stefano-Troina-Adrano line and anchor on the natural San Agata-Cesaro-Adrano defenses.

General Eddy planned to use a one-two punch strategy again, sending one combat team down and astride the well-paved Troina-Cesaro Highway, while another made a wide envelopment of the Cesaro ridgeline from the north. This latter combat team was to travel from Capizzi to Monte Pelato, thence to Monte Camolato and from there drive southeast down the San Fratello-Cesaro road, which would render the enemy's positions untenable.

The most amazing part of this plan was that to accomplish it required the 15th Engineers' building a road behind the flanking regiment as it advanced. This was necessary; for there were no roads, save mule trails between Capizzi and Monte Camolato. Silence and secrecy also were a *must,* as the enemy did not believe this route accessible to any armed group and would be surprised utterly by a flanking attack. Finally, pack trains were to be used for evacuating the wounded and bringing up fresh ammunition and food—until the road reached the forward troops.

General Eddy chose the 60th C.T. to do the flanking while the 47th C.T. punched forward down the more direct route. At that time the 39th C.T. still was fighting against the enemy at Troina, and was unavailable for any Divisional scheme.

It was on August 2nd that General Bradley and General Eddy presented their plans to the *Go-Devils'* Colonel de Rohan and his S-3 (operations), Major (Lt. Colonel) Charles T. Fort. They were to begin the secret move during the night of August 5-6 and drive from Capizzi on Monte Pelato with . . . "utmost secrecy so that the enemy would be taken by surprise."

Unfortunately, the 1st Division was unable to capture Troina by August 5th. And as the Ninth had arrived in jump-off positions preparatory to accomplishing relief of the *Big Red One* on the night of August 5-6, the situation called for a change. Just after lunch on the 5th, General Bradley visited General Eddy at the Division C.P. The Corps commander stated that the 60th should advance as planned. Such a drive would flank the Germans at Troina and force them back to their next line. He further told the Ninth's commander that if the 1st Division still were unable to take Troina within a few days—and that seemed likely since the area was defended exceedingly well and heavily—that he, General Bradley, would order the remainder of the Ninth Division to follow the route of the 60th C.T. In leaving, the Corps commander told the Division commander to "keep this contingency in mind."

For days the combined strength of the 1st Division, the 39th C.T. and air force bombers had been trying to crack the defenses of Troina. Old hands agreed that it would take some excellent flanking to accomplish the task.

* * * *

ORDERS were not needed to dispatch the 60th into the attack on the morning of the 5th. Already the combat team had moved out, with assistance from the swarthy *bathrobe-wearing* 4th Tabour of Goums and Company *C*, Ninth Medics (including 110 litter bearers). The *Go-Devil* 1st Battalion began infiltrating toward Monte Pelato. One company diverted attention of the main drive by going through the town of Capizzi in the daylight, rattling mess kits, making unnecessary noise and looking like lost sheep. Meanwhile, the rest of the battalion worked its way toward Monte Pelato. They were followed by the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, which moved out at dusk. Monte Pelato was reached by midnight and the course of events changed swiftly.

If the Germans knew about this movement—and they must have—they nevertheless offered no resistance. On the contrary, Nazis withdrew the following day from their Troina defenses. That morning the 1st Division reported that the enemy had withdrawn from the town itself and the 1st moved east through Troina, occupying the line from which it was to be relieved by the Ninth Division. What had happened was simple. German artillery northeast of Troina had been forced to withdraw its support of the Troina area as the result of the flanking manuever of the 60th C.T. This took away the strength of the position and the enemy was forced to retreat.

General Bradley summed it up briefly and accurately:

"In its early stages this movement threatened the enemy's artillery and observation and was instrumental in defeating the enemy holding TROINA!"

Close at the heels of the 60th C.T., the 15th Engineer Battalion set up a bivouac south of Capizzi and began to work improving the road south of that town, as well as constructing a road behind the advancing 60th Infantry.

The enemy now had withdrawn to his San Agata-Cesaro-Adrano line, and in the wake of this retreat many improvements took place. The 39th C.T. and its attachments were back with the Ninth and given a well-earned rest in Division reserve. The 47th C.T. passed through the 26th and 16th Infantries and prepared to drive east. At the same time the 60th C.T. was continuing its famous 100-hour *silent march* across the rugged northern mountain country. Over on the Ninth's right flank, the British 78th Division captured Adrano and was advancing north along the Adrano-Bronte Road. In the far north the 3rd Division had relieved the 45th Division, and with the help of close naval support was prepared to move forward.

* * * *

IT WAS August 7th when the *Raiders* shifted into high gear. Their first objective was to capture a ridge which crossed their front—from Hill 862 to Hill 999. Upon attaining this ridgeline, the 47th was to aid the enveloping 60th in overrunning Cesaro and was then to seize and occupy Casto di Bolo—a prominent hill position further down the road.

The attack began during early morning and soon met heavy artillery fire. Despite this rain of shells, the *Raiders* had developed successfully the defenses around Cesaro and boasted a seven kilometer gain by nightfall. More important, however, capture of their objective revealed information of vital importance to the 60th C.T. The 47th discovered that German artillery was sited squarely in the path of the *Go-Devils* who were advancing on Monte Camolato.

Men of the 60th, however, already had discovered the presence of enemy field pieces. August 7th was by no means an easy day for these *Go-Devils* and their attachments. The regiment was advancing on Monte Camolato (which it hoped to secure before dark) when heavy mortar and artillery concentrations fell upon the leading 1st Battalion without warning at 7:20 A.M. Casualties were high—27 killed and more than 100 wounded. Halted temporarily, the battalion dug in and evacuated its dead and wounded. Since the combat team's supporting artillery was displacing forward when this action occurred, there was no ready means of neutralizing the German positions. Nonetheless, it was known that the shelling was coming from the vicinity of Monte Camolato, as was other fire.

Directly in front of the battalion were prepared enemy positions of machine guns and riflemen. German artillery observation was on the high ground to the north and the battalion was all but pinned down. Each attempt to move brought a corresponding change in the direction of the foe's fire. By now the 3rd Battalion was at Monte Pelato and the 2nd had taken positions in rear of the 1st Battalion. But a strong enemy patrol ambushed the 2nd's rear elements and that cost the 60th five more casualties.

Finally, the 60th Field Artillery was able to go into action. Upon finding positions its supporting fires neutralized the German artillery—although normal observation was impossible, for artillery of both sides was in protected, deep ravines. A *Cub* plane observer had directed the fire from American field pieces and saved the day.

During August 7th enemy artillery and *Nebelwerfer* fire had interdicted the main arteries of travel as far back as Troina. In Africa the enemy's accurate 88mm artillery had been introduced to the Ninth. Now the chief German *secret weapon* was the six-barrelled *Nebelwerfer* rocket gun . . . the *screaming meemie* which was to plague the Division until the end of the war. It could fire and then change positions so fast that knocking one out was almost impossible. One moment it would be firing from one position, and three or four minutes later it would open up at another location—four or five hundred yards distant. Only its flash gave it away. And the enemy had *Shu* mines and demolitions as well, all of which tended to slow the infantry's advance.

* * * *

COLONEL DE ROHAN had decided to hold the 60th C.T. in place during the night of August 7-8—at least until enemy positions were ascertained with accuracy.

Determined to capture Monte Camolato, the 60th sent out early-morning patrols to its front and discovered that the enemy had withdrawn. By 11 A.M. the regiment was jumping off for Monte Camolato through a peasoup fog—which had settled over the rugged mountains and dangerous terrain. Orienting almost became impossible; and to mark the objective, artillery layed down smoke. Monte Camolato was occupied by nightfall with one company of the 2nd Battalion. Meanwhile the 1st and 3rd Battalions took up positions north of Basilica.

When dawn broke across the 47th Infantry's front on the 8th there was no fire—the enemy had withdrawn. The *Raiders* were ordered to carry their drive east where they could occupy the Cesaro ridge, their main intermediate objective. Cesaro's battered outskirts were reached at 6:55 A.M. and the town was placed swiftly under American control. Impeding the advance had been demolitions, mined roads, blown bridges and craters. But the ever-ready engineers immediately went to work, removing explosives and mines and getting the road in shape. The 1st and 2nd Battalions were east of the town by 10 P.M., occupying a ridge slightly north of the road which was a mile and a quarter east of Cesaro, and the 3rd Battalion went west of Cesaro. Capture of Cesaro by the 47th smashed the southern anchor of the enemy's San Agata-Cesaro defenses and this enabled the 3rd Infantry Division to break his northern anchor with the seizure of San Agata and San Fratello.

More than any single factor, however, the tenacious advance of the *Go-Devils* and their consequential occupation of the Monte Camolato positions were of

MONTE ETNA LOOMED IN THE BACKGROUND

overwhelming assistance in cutting the German San Agata-Cesaro line. And as a result of the Ninth's attack on Cesaro, the enemy's Monte Etna positions were in danger, so he withdrew there too.

Southward the British 78th Division entered Bronte on the afternoon of August 8th. With this complete breaking of his defenses the enemy was forced to move to his final natural line, Cap d'Orlando-Randazzo . . . and now the 78th Division was attacking toward Randazzo.

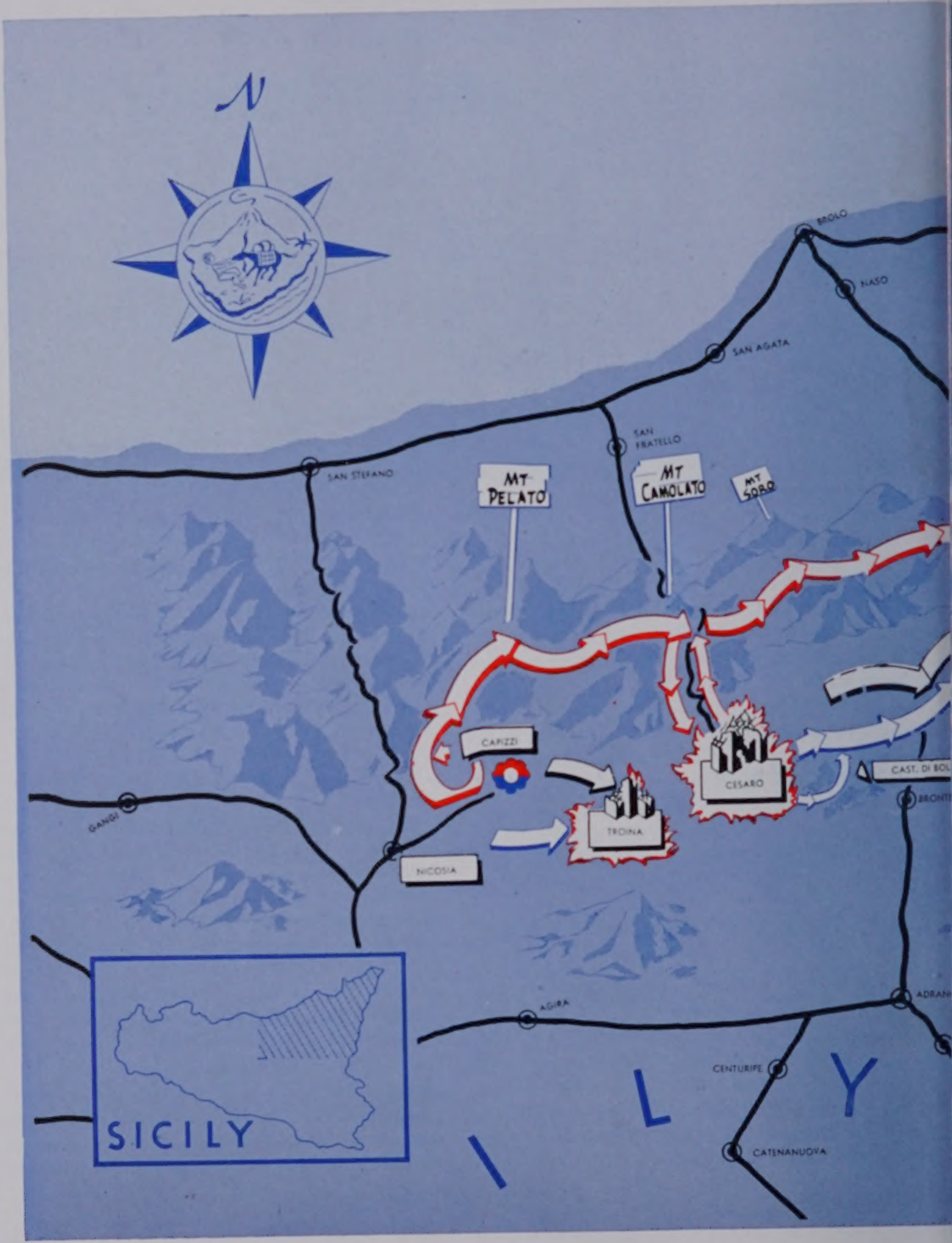
In retreat, nonetheless, the enemy had his revenge. The road from Cesaro to Troina was so full of blown bridges that artillery could not displace forward and was firing at almost maximum range.

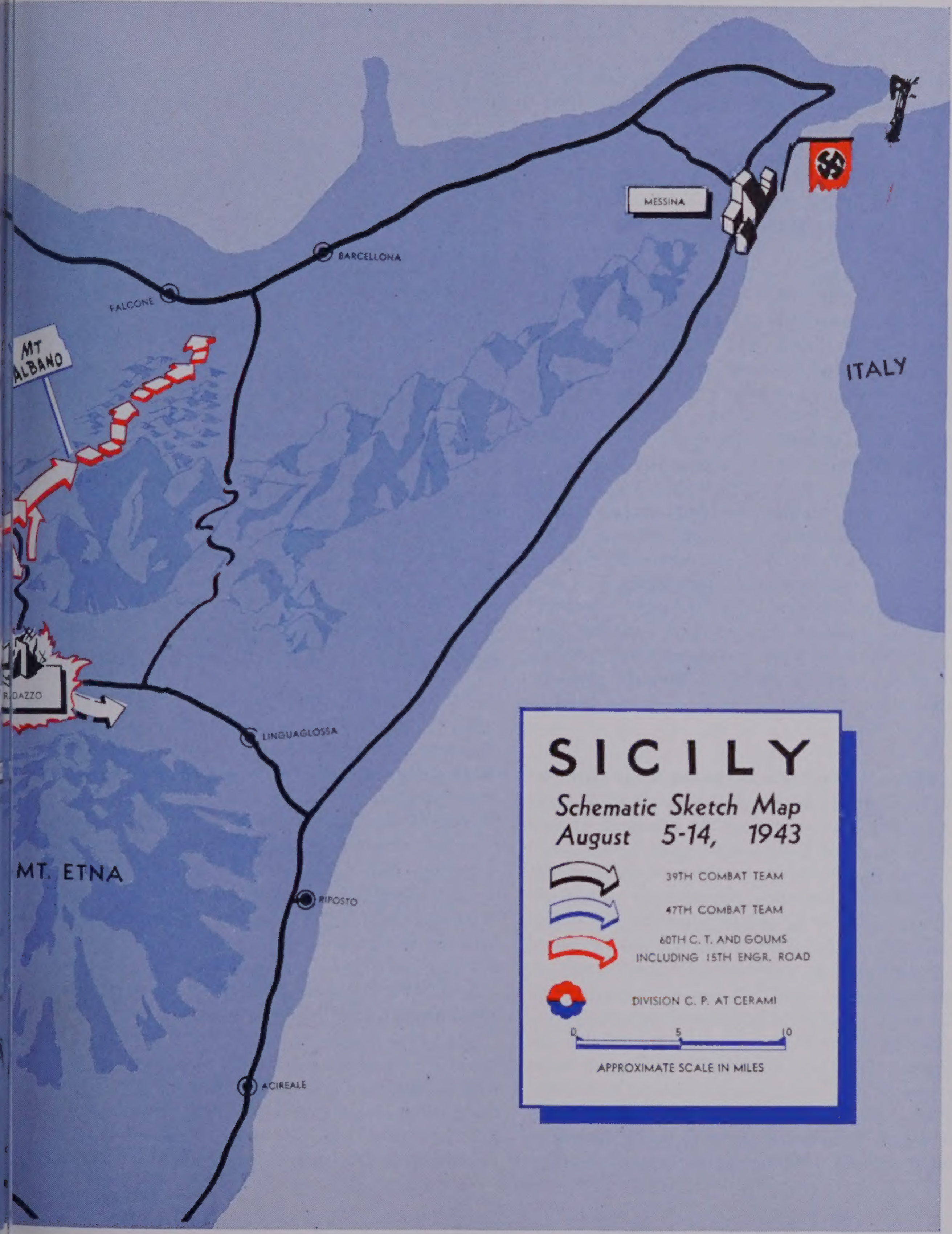
* * * *

FOLLOWING the capture of Cesaro, the 47th C.T. pushed eastward with the mission of gaining several enemy strongpoints before Randazzo. For two days the regiment hacked forward against Hill 1003 and nearby Casto di Bolo, meeting small arms fire and scattered artillery and mortar shelling. Steep, sloping terrain hindered the advance, and on one occasion a small group of the enemy held up an entire battalion. These objectives were captured and occupied by August 10th, however, as well as Rapiti—which had been seized enroute.

Meanwhile, the 60th's 2nd Battalion had been ordered to hold Monte Camolato and its surrounding heights against possible German counterattacks. Lt. Colonel *Black Mike* Kauffman and his men were left on Camolato and the remainder of the regiment turned southeast on the San Agata-Cesaro road—bound for Cesaro. They came out of the mountains a little north of Serra Teodoro. Here Troop *C* of the 91st Recon, which had worked north from Cesaro, contacted the 1st Battalion and reported that the road south to Cesaro was free of mines and craters, in fairly good condition. This was happy news for the mountain-climbing aggregation of weary footsloggers.

Further south on this same day, a motorized movement of the 39th C.T. was in progress. The *Falcons* were able to reach the southern outskirts of battered Cesaro shortly before midnight, although inadequate by-passes and mines had delayed the forward displacement of supporting big guns. All this shifting about was a part of a master scheme to pursue the Germans along the Cesaro-Randazzo road—a 6-meter metalled, two-way highway which, athough winding had a few steep grades and offered the


N
BROLO
NASO
SAN AGATA
SAN FRATELLO
SAN STEFANO
MT PELATO
MT CAMOLATO
MT SORO
CAPIZZI
CESARO
CAST. DI BOL
BRONT
GANGI
TROINA
NICOSIA
AGIRA
ADRAN
CENTURIPE
CATENANUOVA
SICILY
I L Y


MESSINA
BARCELLONA
FALCONE
MT ALBANO
ITALY
RDAZZO
LINGUAGLOSSA
MT. ETNA
RIPOSTO
ACIREALE
SICILY
Schematic Sketch Map
August 5-14, 1943
39TH COMBAT TEAM
47TH COMBAT TEAM
60TH C. T. AND GOUMS INCLUDING 15TH ENGR. ROAD
DIVISION C. P. AT CERAMI
0
5
10
APPROXIMATE SCALE IN MILES

smoothest travel east. *No. 120,* as the road was more familiarly known, now became the route of the Ninth in its efforts to . . . "pursue in a column of regiments, leap-frogging a fresh regiment through any successive defensive positions encountered." With the arrival of the 39th C.T., General Eddy could now execute his plan, jumping the *Falcons* over the *Raiders.*

German plans were rushing to completion simultaneously. It was apparent that the enemy was establishing another defensive line; for contact was lost with him on August 10th, and the British 78th and the Ninth were now in contact to the south. Although the enemy had been withdrawing so as to emplace along the Randazzo axis, he was reported to have left behind certain delaying units. As a consequence, the entire 60th C.T. was reordered back to the Monte Camolato area, to prevent the Germans from using the east-west road which crossed the Cesaro-San Agata highway north of Camolato. And, in accordance with this directive, the *Go-Devils* extended their reconnaissance toward alpine Lake Biviere—occupying Monte Soro and other dominant observation points in the process. Guarding the 60th's left flank were the crafty and silent Goums, as much at home in Sicily as they had been in Tunisia.

* * * *

ONCE more attack was in the air at the Division C.P. It proved to be the opening of the Ninth's final Sicilian drive. Between the left flank of the 60th C.T. and the 3rd Division rolled a stretch of high ground—believed to hold the accurate enemy artillery pieces which were hindering the capture of Randazzo. By having the 60th envelop this area, chances were that the enemy fire would be stopped . . . so the *Go-Devils* continued their flanking role.

Meanwhile, the 39th C.T. was alerted and prepared to pass through the *Raiders*—toward the Division objective of Randazzo. For this drive, three battalions of artillery somehow had dragged their way into position—over ground containing practically no roads. Moving weapons to proper sites was hard, since blown bridges and culverts made displacing forward difficult. Moreover, the lack of covering vegetation in many areas meant more chance of being observed by the foe. Nonetheless, the artillery was ready to support the *Falcon* advance during the night of August 10-11, and to shower the enemy with some *automatic* artillery fire.

VICTORY PLANNERS . . . GENERALS PATTON AND EDDY

Strategy called for the revitalized 39th to pass through the 47th, while the latter team went into Division reserve. The attacking regiment was to head for the town of Randazzo, seizing successive objectives enroute. Upon arriving at Randazzo, the *Falcons* were to by-pass the objective and march north along a road leading out of the town.

Led by the already popular *Paddy* Flint, the regiment culminated its three day drive on Randazzo with success. At first, contact with the enemy remained lost—for the tenacious pressure of the 60th C.T. to the north and the British to the south had forced him to fall back on Randazzo. Despite this fact, the first day of the push was both a colorful and rough one for the infantry.

Innumerable anti-personnel mine had rendered road shoulders dangerous. Placed at about 20-yard intervals, these explosive mechanisms were coordinated with belts of anti-tank mines, which were about 50 yards apart. Sputtering Monte Etna had made strange molten quagmires on either side of the road sometime before. The mine situation forced the 39th to leave the road and proceed through this volcanic mass. This proved harder going, especially upon the shoes. But an amazing seven kilometer gain was chalked-up that day, and the enemy's cleverly-laid mine fields had halted nothing save comfortable walking!

For the night, the regiment stopped about 2,500 yards from a ridge which was code-named "Cadillac", an ironic word to fling at footsloggers toward the end of a weary day!

For several days the enemy had been attempting a gradual evacuation of Sicily, covered by well-organized delaying groups. His rear guard troops evidently had been well indoctrinated with Nazism, as they waged the usual fanatical resistance to cover a German withdrawal.

After losing contact with the enemy, the 39th finally caught up with his holdouts on August 12th. That meant the regiment had reached the foe's Randazzo axis—his last anchor in the mountainous regions of northeast Sicily. It also marked the beginning of a short, stubborn defense—one which was evidenced in the 2nd Battalion zone.

The 2nd now was encountering stiff resistance from the vicinity of Hill 1364 (*Cadillac*). It was mostly in the form of heavy machine-gun and small-arms fire, and Colonel Flint decided to take the position by double envelopment—working around to the rear of the enemy from both sides. Axis fire was quite heavy, and when darkness fell the infantry lacked several miles of its goal.

Under the shadows of Monte Etna, the 39th trod forth once more on August 13th. Randazzo had been evacuated by the enemy during the night and fell without opposition to the 1st Battalion at 9:40 A.M. This seizure accomplished the final mission of the Ninth Division to the east. Elements of the 1st Infantry Division soon would *leap-frog* over the Ninth and pass through Randazzo in their attack toward Messina. Meanwhile, the men of the *Octofoil* were to carry on a limited drive to the north.

There was little left for the 39th C.T. to do in Randazzo. Already, the British 78th Division had *pinched out* the Ninth Division to the south and had dispatched two battalions to relieve the *Falcon* 1st Battalion in that town. Victorious and weary, the combat team took up defensive positions and patrolled over the Fiume (River) Alcantara—its combat days in Sicily were at an end.

* * * *

THE fall of Randazzo might have been long delayed, had it not been for the successful mountain flanking of the 60th C.T. While the 39th forged ahead, the *Go-Devils* eliminated the enemy's main defensive weapon—his artillery—by capturing the dominant observation.

When the *Falcons* jumped off on August 11th, the 60th was driving ahead under long range artillery bombardment. Despite this fire, the regiment moved forward and occupied Serra Del Re in a twelve kilometer advance over rugged terrain. With the Ninth Recon Troop and the 91st Recon Squadron acting as the eyes and ears to its front, the 60th thrust northeast on Floresta. Monte Moro and Monte Pomarazzo were taken, but as the Germans had the former *zeroed-in*, they shelled it mercilessly and continuously.

Yet the die was cast—without observation posts the defenders could not operate for long. For one thing, the enveloping sweep of the 60th threatened the Axis positions at Randazzo, and with the 39th battering forward, enemy delaying action was melting away. Other sectors similarly were disintegrating. To the north, the 3rd Division had affected an amphibious landing behind the German lines and now was abreast of the northern anchor of the enemy defenses at Cape d'Orlando. And while the British were meeting opposition in the Maletto area, they soon would be victorious as well.

This growing Allied success was not accomplished entirely by an exchange of bullets and shells. On

August 12th an extraordinary feat of engineering was begun by Company *C* of the 15th Engineers. Theirs was also a part of, and a reason for, *Island Victory*. The versatile engineers had built a supply road—from Bosco (woods) di Mangalavite to Floresta—through "practically impassable territory." It was completed by the night of *the 13th*—and capable of withstanding and passing a loaded 2½-ton truck!

Floresta had been hit hard by the 60th Cannon Company and evacuated. Following its capture, the 60th Regiment occupied the Cape d'Orlando-Randazzo road junction to the Montalbano road, Monte Albano and the surrounding hills. Once more the engineers performed a prodigious feat by constructing a 12-mile by-pass across country. This road enabled the main body of the regiment to follow the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon into Montalbano.

The 60th pushed on to Basico and no more. It was August 14, 1943—the memorable day when the 3rd Division *pinched out* the Ninth to the north. Recon scouts had contacted the *Rock of the Marne* division at Furnari. That was near the sea and the 60th C.T. could go no further—since the 3rd was chasing the enemy into Messina along the coast.

18 August 1943

TO: All Troops, 9th Infantry Division

With the campaign in Sicily drawing to a close, I can tell you that once AGAIN you have brilliantly justified my confidence and pride in you as a courageous, efficient, fighting organization.

The mountainous terrain over which you so successfully attacked must have been a challenge to your spirit and stamina—a challenge, I want to say, you met in the highest tradition of the United States Army. The problems you were forced to solve in supply alone would have stopped a less determined division. You have accomplished almost impossible feats of engineering, communication, and evacuation. The lessons you learned in Tunisia have served you well in Sicily.

In every branch you have well earned in the minds of your commanders, your country, AND YOUR ENEMIES, the title of "the VETERAN Ninth Division."

You have all witnessed the wretchedness, the suffering, and the want that war brings to the people of the land in which the war is fought. God forbid that our loved ones at home will have to experience what the peoples of Sicily, Italy, and Germany are now experiencing. It is up to everyone of us to see that this war is brought to a quick and successful conclusion. This can be brought about only by determination for vigorous action in that direction by every individual of this command.

—Major General Manton S. Eddy.

Immediately upon learning that the *Go-Devils* were leaving the mountains and cutting across its route of advance, the 3rd had informed the 60th that the latter could not safely pass beyond Monte Pomanazzo. This news was relayed to General Eddy, who instructed the *Go-Devils* to halt.

For the Ninth Division the campaign was over. Corps placed the Division in reserve and all troops were ordered to remain in place and prepare for a westward motor march.

Messina fell on August 17th, and armed resistance ended in the north. On August 20th General Eisenhower announced that the island was free of the enemy and the fight was officially over. Victory in Sicily had been won thirty-eight days after the initial invasion . . . and the initiative of the war rested more securely with the Allies.

* * * *

THIS was no ordinary victory. It was one which had defeated an enemy army of 405,000 troops. The terrain had been rugged and supplies had not been transported easily. Hairpin turns, blown bridges, narrow winding roads, lack of mine detectors, by-passes, one-way roads, cratered highways and other demolitions had made logistical victory a miracle.

The 709th Ordnance Company had been busy, too. Artillery had gone through the North African campaigns without much replacement of weapons. These pieces now needed much repair, having outlived their normal lives. Vehicles had bearing trouble and transfer-case failures developed continually—as a result of steep graded roads and heavy loads.

Probably the most amazing—and definitely the most publicized—part of the campaign was the sweep of the 60th C.T., in its storied *secret* night marches through the mountains. Because of these maneuvers, the victory had been realized quickly. Aided by the swarthy Goums, who always had been rugged mountaineers, the regiment was able to seize the high ground from the enemy time after time. As a con-

VICTORY PARADE IN CEFALU

sequence, his artillery was unable to obstruct the advance of the Americans.

Many factors aided the regiment's success. There were the men of the 65th Armored Artillery Battalion, who kept at least two batteries of their self-propelled 105mm guns within supporting range (and on call) at all times—despite the almost impassable mountainous terrain. The 60th Cannon Company fired pack howitzers from exceptionally close range. So effective and well-delivered was their fire that it was hard to believe this was the first time the company had seen or fired such weapons. And Technician Fifth Grade Paul Quaranta of the regimental ammunition section performed the prodigious feat of keeping a three-quarter ton truck, full of infantry ammunition, at the heels of the attacking battalions. This was an ingenious accomplishment, since even the quarter-ton jeeps were unable to follow him across the mountains until a trail was blazed.

Mules were another strong reason for the mountain victory of the 60th. They furnished the main means of transportation during this spectacular movement, and the story of these temperamental animals could fill many volumes. For one thing, feed and water were unavailable for pack animals up front. To keep the mules in fodder it was necessary to rotate them to the rear areas. In this manner the tired and hungry animals were fed, watered and rested.

The Ninth Division obtained its animals through the local mayor and the Carabineri. Seventh Army had set the cost of renting or buying, and the Army furnished both captured and American saddles. Food was purchased from merchants in the areas of occupation.

Mules were used for medical evacuation. They were outfitted with litter saddles—which proved rough on the medics as well as the patients. Evacuation was hard, and ingenious methods had to be devised to prevent further injury .

When the footsloggers "moved out of the range of their road-bound supporting 60th Field Artillery", the regiment's Cannon Company substituted its 75mm pack howitzers. So valuable did this method of displacement prove, that the Division recommended all cannon companies be equipped with mule pack trains carrying such loads.

That sort of remark did not bring any smiles from the *mule skinners* . . . who came mostly from the Ninth Division Band. They were the unhappiest men in Sicily, being mostly novices. Nonetheless, by necessity and with typical American ingenuity, even city-bred soldiers soon learned which end of a mule is dangerous.

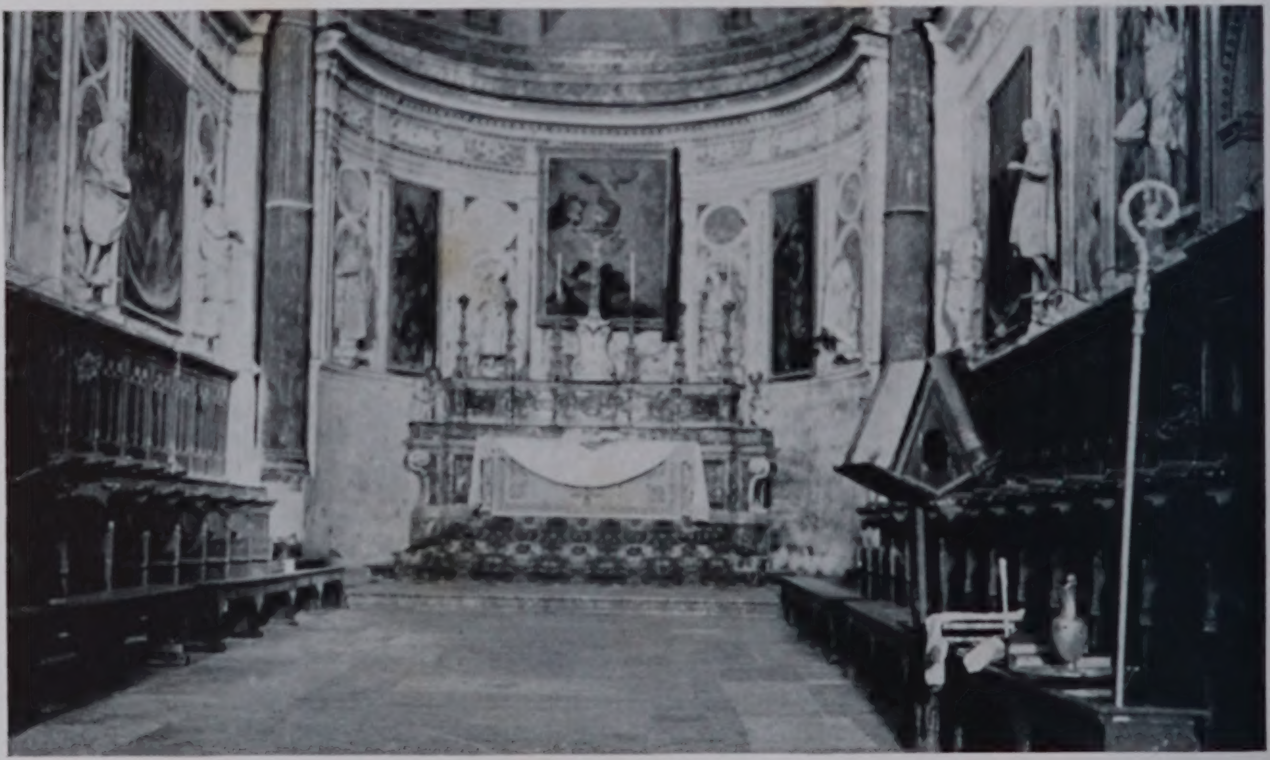
* * * *

THERE was little change in the positions of the Ninth until the island of Sicily was declared officially cleared of the enemy. On that day orders were received for the Division to head for Cefalu, a small Tyrrhenian-sea-coast town noted for its cathedral.

By the 26th the Ninth was encamped around that town and once more deeply in the eternal routine of rest, recreation, light training, combat-experience-swapping and daily passes—this time to Cefalu and Palermo. Palermo was a fairly good town, despite its destruction. On the other hand, Cefalu had little to offer GIs—except its beautiful Cathedral of *The Redeemer of the World*. For some 3,000 officers and men of the Ninth, this awe-inspiring structure meant a chance to pray once more within a house of worship.

As the smoke and destruction of the brief campaign were cleared from Sicily, more normalcy returned to the usually gay and quaint island. It was now that the popular Donut Girls appeared; they were Sally Stearns, Reba Shain and Vera (*Stevie*) Reece of the American Red Cross. Under their

CEFALU'S CATHEDRAL OF THE REDEEMER OF THE WORLD WAS AWE-INSPIRING



AWAITING GENERAL PATTON'S SPEECH

capable direction over 170,000 tasty *sinkers* were distributed to the Ninth Division. Added to the return of more adequate PX rations, donuts made the lot of many war-weary soldiers much more enjoyable.

As donuts were being dunked in G.I. coffee, press recognition came to the Division for the first time. Breaking through the censorship which had kept the Ninth's achievements secret, the *Stars and Stripes* sent its Staff Sergeant Jack Fosie to report on the outfit he had seen in action at Randazzo. One sentence of his article was apropos:

> *The Ninth has the kind of leadership and spirit that makes a fighting outfit.*

Proof of this statement was shown in a letter sent to Sergeant Ernest D. Whitehead of the 15th Engineers by his C.O., Lt. Colonel J. G. Schermerhorn, on August 27th:

"It has been brought to my official attention that you were released from the 2nd Convalescent Hospital, near Oran, Algeria, on 27 July 1943, and through our own initiative and perseverance you succeeded in making your way overland to Bizerte, secured passage on a ship for Palermo, Sicily, and from there made your way overland to rejoin your company in the vicinity of Floresta, Sicily, on 23 August 1943.

"Your initiative, devotion to duty, and loyalty to your organization as manifested by this action, are outstanding examples of the highest traditions and ideals of our Army. As your Battalion Commander, I extend my personal and official commendation for your exemplary conduct. I regret that the War Department at present does not have a more suitable award."

* * * *

THERE were official happenings as well as rest, donuts and letters. General Patton addressed the Ninth on August 26th. Eleven days later General Eisenhower announced that Italy had been granted an armistice and had surrendered unconditionally on September 3rd. That information had been a secret, one which was kept until the Allies had invaded the mainland of Italy.

This was joyous news . . . the well-remembered *one down and two to go* day. But it also brought

NEWLY-NATURALIZED AMERICANS CONGRATULATED

responsibility for the Ninth. Under the terms of the armistice, Italian planes were to be permitted to surrender to the American Army in Sicily; and it was possible that the Germans—furious at this action of its Axis partner—would sacrifice men and materiel in a *Trojan Horse* air invasion of the island. Their purpose would have been to destroy American ammunition, supplies and equipment. Against any such contingency, the 47th C.T. was dispatched to guard the airport at Termini Imerese, while the remainder of the Division was placed on the alert. However, the enemy had his hands full on the continent, and evidently figured Sicily as lost for the duration.

Some official occurrences brought smiles. Fresh meat began arriving (officially), and everyone put on weight, as this very welcome addition to the diet served to make up for a campaign fought on C rations. Several officers and men were sent to the Atlantic Base Section in North Africa prior to rotation to the States; and for a time, it appeared as if others would go. But this dream had only dawned when the new plan was stopped.

On October 10th *Special Troops* was constituted out of the Old Ninth Division Headquarters Company, the Ninth Signal Company, the 709th Ordnance Company, and the Ninth Quartermaster Company. It was almost the size of a battalion and was commanded by Major (Lt. Colonel) Jack Houston.

October passed quickly, and the Division soon was to be on the go once again, but not before two important occasions transpired. First, thirty-four newly naturalized citizen-soldiers of the Ninth were sworn in at a special ceremony on October 25th. They had proved their right to become citizens by fighting for their country. The day following this swearing-in witnessed a farewell review for General Patton. It was the first time that the whole Division had marched in a review on foot, and was topped off with a presentation of medals by the Army commander.

* * * *

WHEN Hallowe'en popped up on the calendar, the Ninth found itself ordered to Mondello, near the city of Palermo—a place aptly described as, "the muddiest patch of ground in the world." It was now the rainy season, and it rained extra hard for the American Army.

Mondello was a staging area; from here the Division would go to England. By November 4th most of the Ninth had arrived in its bivouac area. What once had been an exclusive peacetime resort by the seaside was now a sea of red mud, splashing to the tent-pitching of wet men and weary feet. Life that first night was miserable . . . but a treat compared to November 5th!

On the following day it rained some more—the *cat and dog* variety. There was a heavy, driving wind—some tents were blown away and others floated off in the liquid soil. Gooey mud and the many things which happen prior to sailing overseas added to the misery and disgust produced by the rain—including the often accurate radio ravings of *Axis Sally,* female enemy propagandist. But there was hope that the misery of Mondello soon would end. It did; on November 11th the Division was at sea—heading for England.

GIs lined the rails and began to look back upon their sojourn in the strange island of Sicily. It had not been bad . . . well not *too* bad. Some even had enjoyed the place . . . most men declared it better than North Africa, by far. There had been a chance to watch such performers as Al Jolson, Jack Benny, Adolphe Menjou and the usual USO shows. There were Division soldier shows, and occasional movies by the blue Tyrrhenian Sea, 36-hour passes for persons of Sicilian descent to visit their relatives; passes to Palermo and an occasional girl (who had an uncle or cousin in America). Yes, it had been much better than North Africa. There had been *vino, vermouth* and *marsala* to drink . . . nuts and fruits . . . quaint and gay donkey carts . . . quainter-still natives . . . and donuts and PX rations and *fresh* meat! All-in-all, this rest had not been *too* bad. It certainly was better than combat!

* * * *

ABOARD warm, dry vessels, the officers and men of the Ninth Infantry Division presented a vastly different picture than had those who set sail from America to invade North Africa. *These* men were an experienced combat outfit. Few American divisions, in any theater, could match their combat record or spirit. Of course the purpose of sailing to England meant but one thing—springboard to invasion of the continent. Yet the Ninth was good enough for the job now—a little polish, maybe, and then its fighting men could go into action against the best Hitler had to offer. They had done it before and they could do it again.

But there was a kind of sadness in leaving the Mediterranean for those who remembered Safi, Port Lyautey, Algiers, Tunisia and Sicily. Behind lay hopes and despair, happiness and fallen comrades. The road had not been an easy one . . . it was still pitted and rough. A phase had ended in everyone's life, and post mortems are usually sad. This was the small town boy returning to civilization after he had made good. This was the *Veteran* Ninth Infantry Division. Ahead lay England and a new life.

It was another place to visit, if nothing else!

* * *

Section V Photography credits: Pages 124, 127, 131, 138, 141, 142, 143, 144, by 15th Engineers; 135 by 39th Infantry.

Section VI

ENGLAND--Bridge To Invasion

Respite and Civilization

FOR once, *Dame Fortune had* smiled upon the Ninth. England meant an approach to normalcy and a common tongue. If some place outside of America had to be chosen as a temporary Division home, this embattled island kingdom was as good as any—and better than most.

Announcement that the United Kingdom was to be their eventual destination brought grins to even the seasick. The Ninth's soldiers had spent the past year amongst sub-standard living conditions, without normal pleasures and in areas devoid of those sights which appear so prominently on travel posters. Perhaps now there would be more movies, girls, dancing, better drinks, furloughs, leaves, quicker mail service and regular bathing facilities—if the rumor mongers (for once) could be taken at their word.

As part of the twenty transport convoy—which was protected by a flotilla of eight sleek destroyers—the *USAT John Ericsson* (former *Kungsholm*) had a journey which was typical of the entire group. The *Ericsson* passed through the Straits of Gibraltar on November 15th and headed into the Atlantic. There were three movies daily aboard the crowded ship, talen shows by the *Raider Hot Shots* and the Ninth Division *Blue* Band, recorded programs, church services and entertainment furnished by the men themselves. Two main meals were served each day, with soup or a hot beverage at noon. While this menu became unbelievably monotonous, there were candies, smokes and other PX rations which made their way into the various holds and cabins.

Instructive talks on Great Britain began and booklets were issued regarding the differences in expressions and customs. All this was the beginning of a short, intensive campaign—on the part of the Division—to insure proper conduct from a group of rugged fighting men, who had spent a bit too much time away from people who understood their language. However, that sort of worrying was mostly for naught, for the men appreciated their new environment after arrival and guarded against abuses.

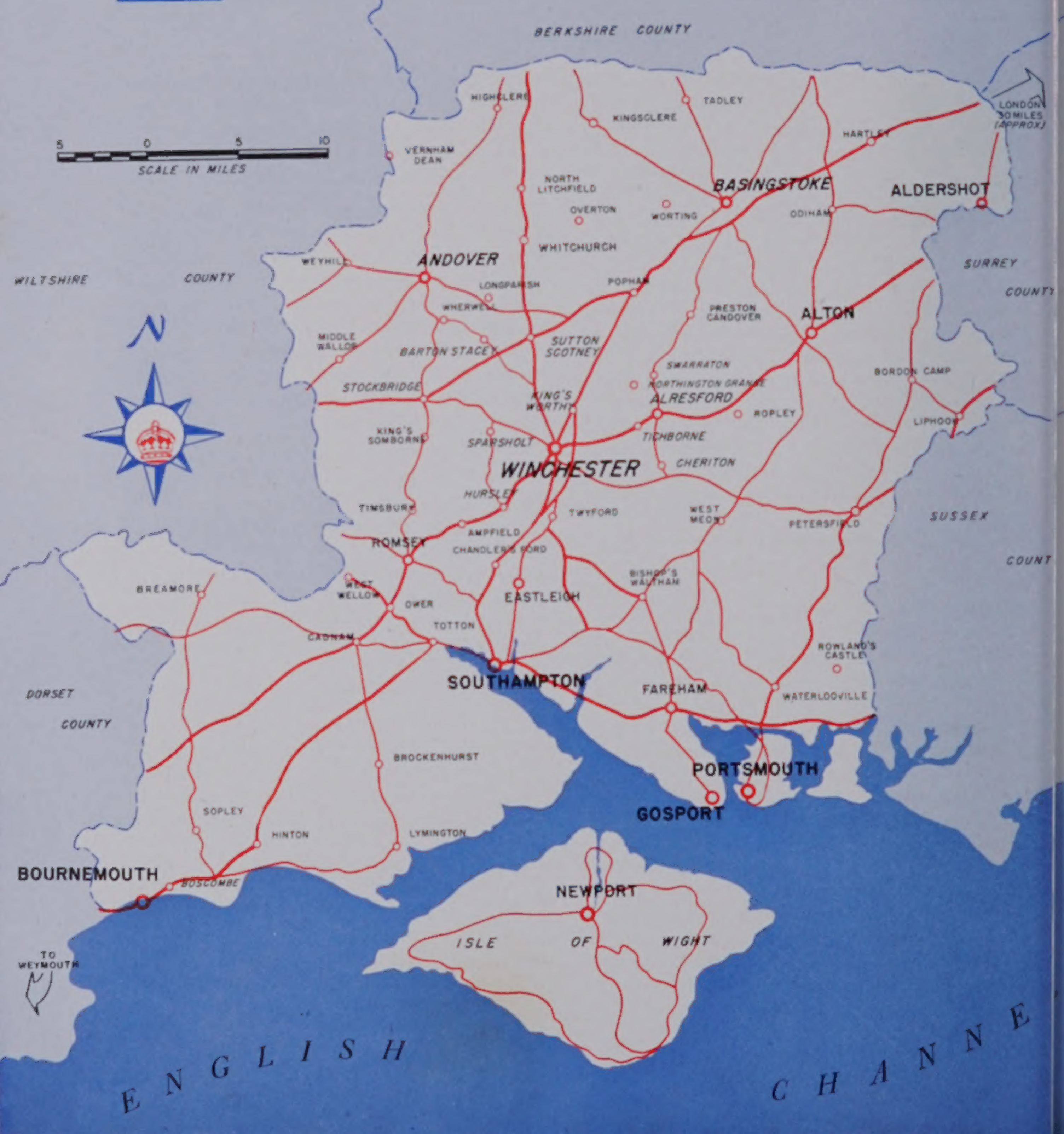
The two week 2,800-mile trip had brought the convoy off the British Isles, and the fairly rough sailing was almost over. Ahead lay the foggy, windy Irish Sea and journey's end. Faced with a brisk wind at the mouth of the Mersey River, the *Ericsson* was forced to drop anchor five miles outside the river's mouth. On the following morning—Thanksgiving Day, November 25th—the long docks and many wharves of Liverpool were reached. The sea part of the voyage was over.

Liverpool was not as badly bombed as other English cities to the south and east. But this was not a sight-seeing tour, and in debarking, troops received little chance to view anything except the vague shores of New Brighton across the water—and an occasional person waiting below on the quay. Before long the transport-weary passengers had checked off the vessel and were southbound . . . on those never-to-be-forgotten trains, complete with shrill whistles and separated *carriages*.

As one group of the Ninth began unloading at Liverpool, other vessels of the convoy had berthed in the port of Swansea, Wales; still others passed vigilant Ben Lomond to enter Gourock, Scotland. By the 26th most of the Division had reached its new home, which proved to be a region in and

> . . . and veteran divisions from the North African and Mediterranean theaters—the 1st and 9th Infantry and 2d Armored Divisions—moved in to join forces for the big show.
>
> —*Mission Accomplished*
> (History of VII Corps)

Hampshire County, England


BERKSHIRE COUNTY
HIGHCLERE
KINGSCLERE
TADLEY
HARTLEY
LONDON 30 MILES (APPROX)
5 0 5 10
SCALE IN MILES
VERNHAM DEAN
NORTH LITCHFIELD
OVERTON
WORTING
BASINGSTOKE
ALDERSHOT
ODIHAM
WEYHILL
ANDOVER
WHITCHURCH
WILTSHIRE COUNTY
LONGPARISH
POPHAM
SURREY COUNTY
WHERWELL
PRESTON CANDOVER
ALTON
N
MIDDLE WALLOP
BARTON STACEY
SUTTON SCOTNEY
SWARRATON
NORTHINGTON GRANGE
BORDON CAMP
STOCKBRIDGE
KING'S WORTHY
ALRESFORD
ROPLEY
LIPHOOK
KING'S SOMBORNE
SPARSHOLT
TICHBORNE
WINCHESTER
CHERITON
HURSLEY
TIMSBURY
TWYFORD
WEST MEON
PETERSFIELD
SUSSEX COUNT
AMPFIELD
ROMSEY
CHANDLER'S FORD
BREAMORE
WEST WELLOW
BISHOP'S WALTHAM
EASTLEIGH
OWER
TOTTON
CADNAM
ROWLAND'S CASTLE
SOUTHAMPTON
FAREHAM
WATERLOOVILLE
DORSET COUNTY
BROCKENHURST
PORTSMOUTH
GOSPORT
SOPLEY
HINTON
LYMINGTON
BOURNEMOUTH
BOSCOMBE
NEWPORT
ISLE OF WIGHT
TO WEYMOUTH
ENGLISH CHANNE

around the city of Winchester—about forty-five miles southwest of London.

The quarters allotted to the various units of the Ninth Division proved to be the best the Ninth had seen in over a year. Division headquarters and regimental command posts were set up in the *hub* city of Winchester or in surrounding towns.

After the *AAA-O*-helmeted men of the 39th landed at Swansea, they moved to Camp Barton Stacey, a former British installation. The *Falcons* had arrived on the 26th during the usual cold English November weather. Awaiting them were barracks and Nissen huts. At Winchester and Bushfield the 60th moved into *its* new billets—which had been put in apple-pie order by the 506th Parachute Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division. Those who went to Winchester Barracks—once home of Charles II, and later barracks for the much-cited *King's Royal Rifle Corps* and the *Rifle Brigade*—found a hot meal awaiting their arrival. (The 60th Rifles of the British Army formerly had been stationed here and the British "made much of this.") A nine-hour, 250-mile ride carried the 47th to its area. Alresford, Tichborne, Cheriton, Armsworth House, Brighton Wood, Bishop Sutton, Basingstoke and Northington Grange (largest home in England outside of Buckingham Palace) housed the *Raiders*. Other units, including Division headquarters, were at such places as West Downs School and the ancient dwellings on *High Street*.

Although the Division personnel had arrived in excellent shape, some of the Ninth's equipment had not. It reposed in the port of Liverpool, and for a time it seemed as if a special envoy would have to fetch it. But after some delay this materiel arrived and a training schedule was under way.

First there was school. From November 27th until December 3rd a course of instruction in manners and customs was given to each individual of the Division. This was followed by an examination and those who passed were issued daily passes, with fifteen percent of the command allowed to visit Winchester and London. Inauguration of this initial policy soon was followed with eight and ten day leaves and furloughs. And free time proved to be only the beginning of pleasures—there were the newly opened Red Cross Clubs, USO shows, dances, movies, boxing, newspapers in English each day, the *Stars and Stripes*, radio stations *BBC* and *AFN* and lots more.

* * * *

THE sites chosen for the Ninth may not have been located in the largest cities, but they belonged to a section which could boast of centuries of tradition and an almost inexhaustible supply of sights to see.

At historic, retiring Winchester, the Ninth found a *second home*. This ancient capital of England had been host to American troops during the first World War as well. At that time thousands of *Yanks* had been stationed on the huge ridge beyond the city. The second war brought many more visitors, most popular of which turned out to be the Ninth. Battle-hardened veterans of Africa and Sicily became part of a 1200-year-old community—both in this *city of five castles* and for a radius of thirty-five miles.

At Winchester Barracks, West Downs School, Barton Stacey, Alresford, Tichborne, Andover, and later Boscombe and Bournemouth, men of the Ninth had seven months of unforgettable friendship. Unquestionably here was *Merrie Olde England* at its best. There were the strange, unforgettable first sights of a new land. Some were odd, others reminded the Division of home. Above all here was a land where English could be spoken and understood; where a temporary respite from a hard year of war could be enjoyed.

Time-worn roads and countrysides became familiar hangouts. Soon it was the most natural thing in the world to drive on the left side of the street. Helmeted Bobbies courteously answered the mountains of questions which popped into GI heads. In

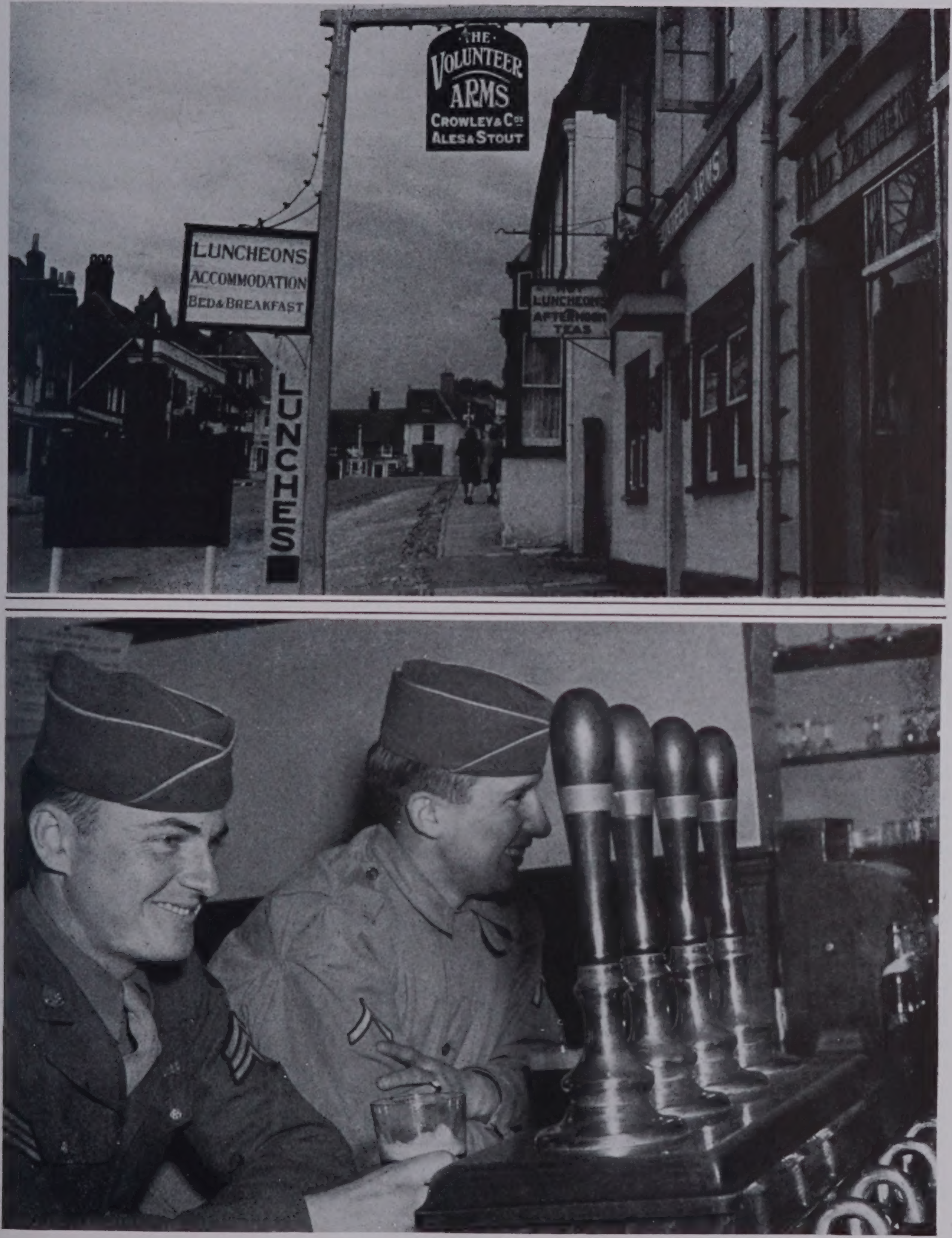
GOUROCK WAS A PORT OF ENTRY FOR SOME NINTHMEN

the ever-crowded *Pubs*, the beer wasn't ice-cold, and it wasn't plentiful . . . but it was shared "generously and willingly" by the natives.

Moreover, the area was rich in tradition and lore. Winchester always had been one of the most interesting tourist cities in the world. William the Conqueror built his palace atop its *High Street* after the Battle of Hastings. Egbert, first king of all England, reigned and was buried within the city walls. Winchester Cathedral, longest Gothic Church in Europe, was the Westminster Abbey of ancient England and early Parliaments were held in Winchester Castle. Originally built by the invading Normans (under William), that famous structure now housed the *Round Table* of legendary King Arthur's reign. As in the days when Sir Walter Raleigh was sentenced to death in its famed hall, the building still was used for the dispensing of justice.

Apart from the historic and cultural aspects of the city, the rolling countryside and nearby South Coast offered soldiers a haven from duties and drill. Bournemouth—with its beaches, antique shops, beautiful park by the sea, theaters, Square, modern atmosphere and many men's *hairdressers*—was a good town on pass. At Andover there were *pubs* and more *pubs*. These were the famed *Public Houses*—the poor man's meeting hall and night club combined. The beer was a little weaker than in peacetime, but it was still drawn from picturesque *pumps* and sold by the *pint* or *half*.

There was Alresford, the town with *tea and scones* . . . where from a 400-year-old tea shop, *The*


THE VOLUNTEER ARMS
CROWLEY & Co's ALES & STOUT
LUNCHEONS ACCOMMODATION BED & BREAKFAST
LUNCHES
LUNCHEONS AFTERNOON TEAS

ALRESFORD (ABOVE) WAS FAMED FOR ITS MANY PUBS (BELOW)

Tea Pot by name, a jovial little lady with a slight limp (*Ma*) served her wares to queues of hungry soldiers. In this same rural town, with its thatch-covered huts, there were many *pubs*: the *Horse & Groom, Swan Hotel, Bell Hotel, The Peaceful Home, Swan Tap Bar, The Sun, The Globe, The Volunteer Arms, The Cricketers Arms, The Dean Arms* and *The Running Horse*. Up near the bus stop was the *G. Turner Cycle Shop*, where a soldier could rent a bicycle and tour the countryside.

* * * *

THEN there was Barton Stacey, home of the 39th . . . there was Barton Stacey and its beloved Constable Lane. He was a county policeman—the entire legal police force for a dreamy, grey, ancient hamlet of 830 people. Since the average English *Bobbie* was assigned in the ratio of one per thousand inhabitants, tiny Barton Stacey drew the minimum.

Constable Lane more than filled the bill. His wise and cautioning methods kept crime down to a minimum. He became a respected, obeyed institution. When war came nearby Camp Barton Stacey was filled with the strange, rugged battle veterans of North Africa and Sicily. *AAA-O* and the *Octofoil* patch appeared over a peaceful countryside. Across the former stamping grounds of King Alfred, William the Conqueror, Oliver Cromwell and ancient wayfarers, a new *invasion* was taking place. It was a friendly landing—although an overpowering one. To Constable Lane's precinct had come *Paddy* Flint and friends, and the once-small community grew overnight to over 4,000 inhabitants. Lane sanctioned a deputy—in case of an emergency . . . and waited expectantly for the worst.

Out of their Nissen Huts and brick *long houses*, *Paddy's* boys flocked at night. To Barton Stacey's *Swan* and *Plow* inns came thirsty American throats. Happily surprised the constable saw crime go down rather than up, for the *Falcons* respected their first real home since Fort Bragg. The Constable was unanimously appointed *The Sheriff* by his visitors, and his staff now included a few Ninth M.P.'s.

Many of the men expanded their territory to include Andover and Winchester. Barton Stacey was not equipped to take care of them all—only a limited few. Besides . . . the rolling lands, the quaint old *pubs* and greener pastures called out for exploration; and by cycle, bus and foot the troops fanned out. But the little village had captured its steady visitors, and as time passed the *Sheriff* became both father and father-confessor to the regular patrons of Barton Stacey's two *pubs*. Some GIs even visited his home—to exchange views by the warmth of an English front-room fire.

If any group of soldiers ever managed to be taken to heart by a local population in wartime, these happy, carefree *Yanks* did the trick

* * * *

MOST popular place for a pass was London—queen pleasure spot of the British Isles, largest city in the world, purveyor and displayer—bombed but not beaten. Here was the gossiped-about Piccadilly Circus, the American Red Cross Rainbow Corner, Bass Ale, Buckingham Palace, Leicester Square, Lyon's Corner House, high-priced street walkers, tours of a battered metropolis, the Underground, uniforms galore and girls, girls, girls. The uniformed British women were all there . . . The ATS, WAAF, WRENS and the WLA, more numerous than when on parade. They did a man's work during the week but on pass they managed to look ladylike.

England had suffered from rationing and years of war—Winchester and London were no exceptions, particularly the latter. On the other hand, an Englishman invariably would spread out his meager week's ration when GI visitors dropped in, and had to be convinced that his guest had eaten previously. During bombings the natives were pretty matter of fact—as if that sort of thing always had existed.

It was only in the matter of money that any difficulties developed. This trouble came not from the English currency—for a game of cards or a trip to the PX soon familiarized a man with English money; and some *Yanks* came by *bob, quid* and *hapennies* as naturally as they did *two-bits* and a *buck*. The money difficulty lay in the difference between American and British pay scales; and it was enough to cause grey hair amongst promoters of international goodwill.

Yanks received more per week than the British *Tommy* or airman earned during the month. And

WINCHESTER: KING ALFRED'S STATUE

as a result, the American soldiers could take a girl to the more expensive *cinemas* or show her a better time than could the boys from home . . . and do it more often. Because the English *pound* notes seemed *unreal* some Americans spent them as they would dollars, and that surprised the thrifty Britishers *no end.*

In spite of these differences great friendships developed—friendships which were carried on through and after the war, in the form of letter-writing and revisitation. Some soldiers of the Ninth met and married girls in this land, and many families had their steady weekend guest from the cantonment area. An Englishman proved to be just as good a friend as he could be a bad enemy. Retiring yes, but not snobbish, the natives were at first a little hard to know. But after warming up they opened their hearts and conversed freely.

Memories of England invariably include those nights of rushing in before bedcheck, trams (trolleys), the nightly queue for *fish and chips*—mostly for *chips,* eaten from a newspaper wrapper and doused freely with vinegar and salt—and the mob at the bar trying to get a refill. At night there was *mild* and *bitter* beer and an occasional glass (thimble) of whiskey. There was the strange local method of using a fork and knife—strange to Americans anyway. And there were the kids running alongside, begging . . . "Any gum, chum?" Last but not least, there were peaceful Sundays, with gracious clergymen and spotless children to gaze upon.

* * * *

THESE things all furnished needed pleasure and relief to the men of the Ninth on pass. But there was another and more serious aspect of the Division's stay in the United Kingdom. The main reason that the U.S. Army was there daily became more evident. Every action, every bit of training performed led to that long-awaited day, when a *second front* could be opened along the closely guarded shores of Western Europe.

The preparation for invasion rapidly became an obsession with the commanders and staffs of each large unit. Throughout all England, *Bigot* (Secret) rooms were set up. Sandtables of the invasion coast and inland areas were made and studied over and over again down to the *Nth* degree. Only a chosen few knew or even suspected, that these were actually reproductions of the ground over which the Ninth Division would fight in Normandy.

For its new venture in Europe, the Ninth received the 899th Tank Destroyer Battalion as an attachment on December 10th. This outfit had won fame with its M-10 Destroyers in Africa. Using 3-inch guns, bazookas and intestinal fortitude, they had stopped German armor—the first time Americans had been able to halt Rommel's "Panzers" on the dark continent.

Affairs of *state* were sandwiched in between training schedules. The band of the *King's Royal Rifle Corps* and the *Rifle Brigade* visited the Ninth, giving concerts and demonstrations at Winchester. Three year *Good Conduct Medals* were awarded at this time and many men were eligible. There were new dog tags, as well as gas masks to be worn by sentries on post.

Toward the end of December the 2nd Battalion of the 60th Infantry formally was given a *Distinguished Unit Citation*, during a special ceremony held in the large quadrangle at Winchester Barracks. General Bradley, who was now the Army commander, presented the award. The action cited was at Djebel Dardyss, a locality which was far different from Winchester, where cold winter weather had necessitated the wearing of overcoats.

Winter and Christmastime of 1943 were much happier for the Ninth than the same period of a year

GENERAL BRADLEY PRESENTS CITATION

previous. For one thing many gifts arrived on time. And the grizzled veterans had someone to spend their holidays with . . . the youngsters of the area, who received little opportunities for candy or gifts in time of war. There were many parties held for these children and all featured Santa Claus (Father Christmas), gifts, refreshments and good cheer. While it was the second Yuletide spent away from America for the Ninth, it was cheery. Turkey dinner and all the trimmings tasted *almost* as good as at home.

* * * *

THE New Year's Day of 1944 passed and the Ninth now was deep in its first normal existence since leaving the States. There were *Army Talks*, training, firing on the range and marches. Left-hand driving had resulted in some accidents . . . especially from drivers trying to push a tall truck through Winchester's West Gate Tower.

Then on January 19th General Montgomery—the *Monty* of North African and Eighth Army fame—visited the Division. Standing astride the hood of a jeep the British leader addressed the men of the Ninth, reminding them of the "old days" in North Africa and Sicily. *Monty* told the troops, who were standing at attention, to break ranks and form around him and thus got off to a good start. As he left it was easy to see that he had made a good impression . . . and it was equally vivid that more combat was around the corner.

America's entrance to England's more conservative communities caused some changes. Winchester was a city of *Blue Laws* and Sunday was a day of rest. But even that ancient corporation bent to meet the times, when the city fathers finally decided to break with custom and allow Sunday movies in Winchester. The move diverted little attendance, if any, from the region's magnificent cathedrals and churches—as witnessed on January 20th, when special Division services were held at Winchester Cathedral as part of the *Allied Day of Prayer*.

It was amazing how much the city of Winchester went out of its way to aid the Ninth. Such people as the mayor, Lt. General Griffiths, the Bishop of Winchester, the Dean of Winchester Cathedral, Alderman Sankey and the Colonel commanding the British 60th Rifles were as fine a group of friends as any military unit could desire. Members of the 47th Infantry owed a particular debt of gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Campbell-Browning and to Lord and Lady Tichborne, who furnished the regiment with billets.

TRAINING INTENSIFIED AS EASTER APPROACHED

The battle of Europe still lay ahead, and every once in a while somebody came along to remind the men that they had but one real purpose in being overseas. This fact was brought forth strongly on February 23rd when Major General (Lt. General) J. Lawton *(Lightning Joe)* Collins, the new VII Corps commander, addressed the Division at Camp Barton Stacey. General Collins knew whereof he spoke, for at Guadalcanal and other areas of the Pacific he had led victorious American troops against the Japs.

As the damp winter weather turned into crisp spring this speech appeared to have been a prophesy. Training was being stepped up and talk of the invasion was becoming more prevalent. Simultaneously, the might of the Allied invasion army was growing fast; and it was visible, because there was so much of it lying everywhere. *D-Day* was as common a topic of conversation as baseball, football or who drank the most beer in the *pub* the previous night. Only no one knew exactly where or when the intended landings would take place. Rumors had the Allies invading Norway, France, Spain and even Germany itself.

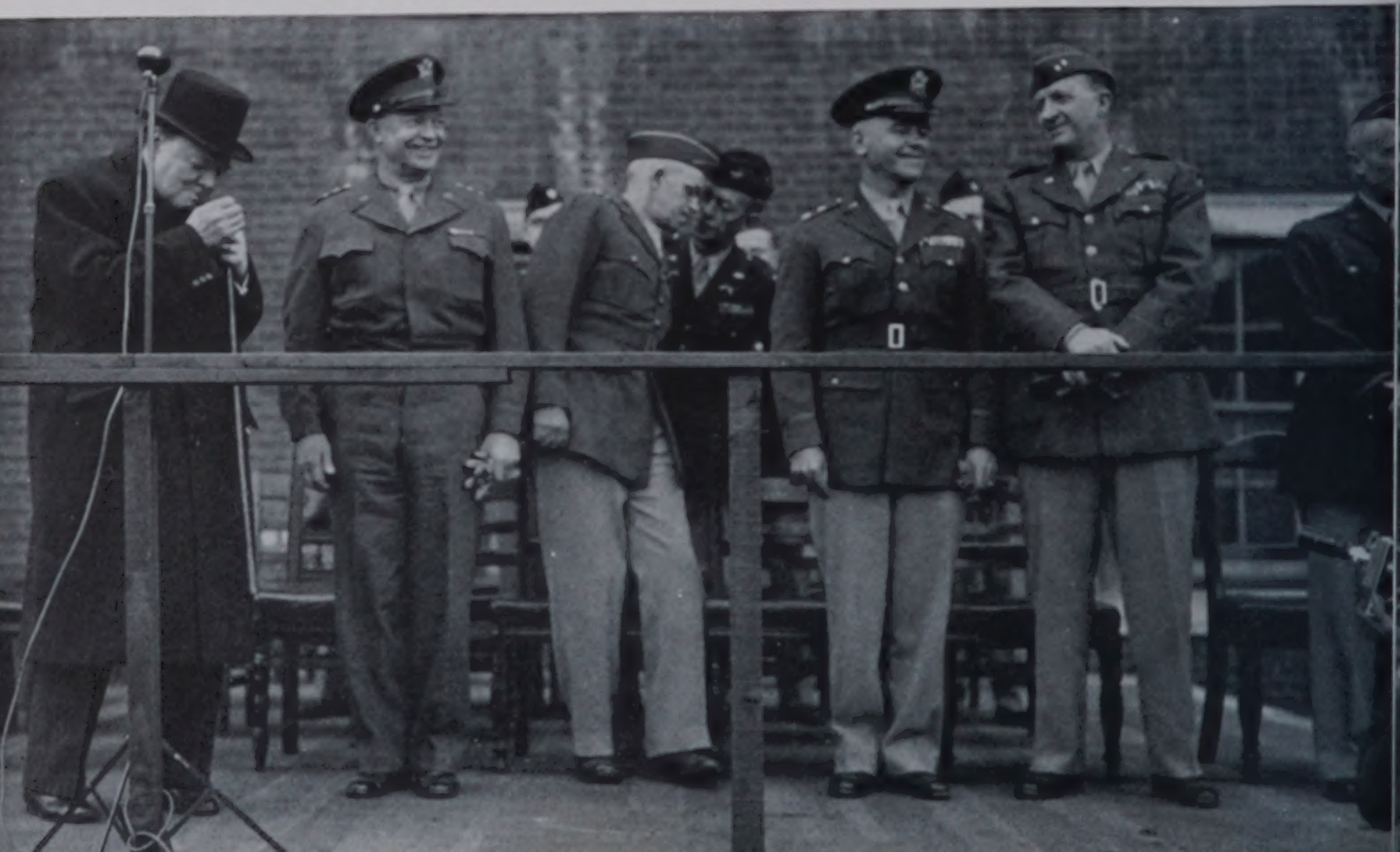
Relatively few knew the answers to these questions although some of the top-ranking persons now visited the Ninth. On March 24th popular Prime Minister Winston Churchill, Supreme Commander General Eisenhower and Generals Bradley and Collins arrived to spend the day with the Division.

The entire Ninth Infantry Division and all of its equipment was on display for these illustrious visitors. It was a grand show and the Division looked as soldierly as any outfit could. Foot troops were aligned along the route in neatly pressed uniforms, and drivers had made their vehicles spotless. Artillery pieces were placed in a horseshoe, with the veteran forty-eight guns of the Division Artillery in sparkling condition—their muzzles raised to the sky. This array of might led the Prime Minister to remark that these pieces represented more guns than there were in all of England during the Battle of Britain in 1940!

With some of the most important persons in the world in his care, General Eddy was somewhat worried that they had chosen an open car on an extremely cold day. He asked the Prime Minister if he would care to change to a sedan. In the typical spirit of *blood and sweat and tears* Mr. Churchill, who was then over seventy years of age, refused and even alighted into the crowded streets along the route—to talk with the populace. He did not have any special police protection such as accompanied the President of the United States, and that fact amazed the Americans.

Men of the Ninth were able to boast of many things, their combat and their garrison records. However, they gained another unofficial title, that of *show division* which occasionally attached itself to the Division—for the soldiers of the *Octofoil* had paraded for the President of the United States, the King and the Prime Minister of England, the

INVASION PLANNERS (left to right): CHURCHILL, EISENHOWER, BRADLEY, FLINT, COLLINS, EDDY AND STROH



top-ranking military and naval leaders of the Allied world and for hundreds of other dignitaries. Surely such an outfit must have been an exemplary one.

* * * *

EASTER SUNDAY found the Ninth on a field problem By this time leaves and furloughs had all but ended, and the real purpose of the Division's stay in England was unveiled once more for everyone to see. With the advent of British *double summertime* Ninthmen arose two hours earlier and the nights became ever lighter.

During May the issuance of *Combat Infantryman's Badges* got underway for men who had earned them many times over. Training reached its peak too, with the techniques of water-proofing and *wading* of vehicles stressed. There was less and less time for pleasure and more for training and conditioning. Finally the Ninth climaxed its program with a test for clearing out on the proposed invasion.

While the Division had been concerned with its own personal problems, there were weighty decisions being made a few miles away at *SHAEF* Headquarters, which was hidden in a park outside of London (Bushey Park, near Kingston-on-Thames). Here in the former game preserves. Of Henry the Eighth, Allied bigwigs plotted the overthrow of Hitler and Nazism.

They'd had a lot of external kibitzing. Ever since the United States had entered the war, Russia had been clamoring for some sort of diversionary *second front*. The original desire was to undertake this operation immediately against Western Europe, but this was not feasible until 1944. Russia wanted 60 German divisions diverted, and to accomplish such a task required a stupendous mass of men and materiel—both of which were slow forthcoming during the reversal years of 1941 and 1942. However, a diversion *was* created in North Africa . . . one which disposed of far more Axis troops than could have been destroyed by a too-early landing on the continent. Moreover, from this North African base, Sicily and Italy had been brought under Allied attack, the Mediterranean was cleared to allow supplies to reach Russian forces and the foe was materially weakened in the whole process.

The history of *Operation OVERLORD*, the plan for invasion of Western Europe, is an involved and lengthy subject. Briefly, it became necessary for the Allies to assault the continent in force, if the war were to come to a speedy conclusion. Dunkirk and the fall of France lost for the Allies the natural and ancient battleground of Europe, and after England's victorious air Battle of Britain, Hitler built a wall of *Maginot-type* defenses along the coastline. This was the vaunted and over-propagandized *Atlantic Wall*, constructed by slave laborers over a period of four years—designed to stem and repel any storming of *Fortress Europa*.

In the fall of 1943 General Bradley was sent to England to form an army for the invasion. It turned out to be the excellent First Army—later hailed throughout military circles as the "finest army in the world."

At this time the Allied campaign in Italy was proceeding very slowly and the Russians needed more relief from the pressure of Nazi *total war* . . . especially if they were to launch a successful counterattack. Fortunately the opening of the Mediterranean sea lanes, combined with the Italian invasion and the strategic bombing of Europe by the massive Allied air arm, were having a destructive effect upon the German military machine.

Germany was fast becoming a victim of the war of nerves, and at the slightest hint of Allied movement, dispatched troops and guns hither and yon. Such a false scare occurred at the beginning of winter, when General Eisenhower went home for a visit. Believing that this journey heralded the anticipated invasion of the *Atlantic Wall*, Hitler's high command snatched troops which could have waged war against the Russians and hurried them to the 700-mile long invasion coast. Stepped-up long range bombing by the Allies increased the enemy's apprehension. Thus the current Russian

FOR THE ENGINEERS TRAINING HAD INCREASED, TOO

drive was more successful, and the Germans wasted precious fuel and manpower by moving about.

* * * *

D-DAY was planned to fall in May or June of 1944, and depended upon favorable tides—such as those which prevailed around June 5th, 6th or 7th. Along the 700 miles of coastline which stretched from the Netherlands to the south Atlantic ports of France, were several ports where a beachhead might be established. To Allied planners the best of these appeared to be the Normandy Peninsula, with its protected landing areas and routes for expansion. This also was one of the regions from which the Germans least expected an invasion—for the only major port was Cherbourg, and that might take some time to capture.

The *OVERLORD* operation was to be coordinated with an invasion against the south of France some weeks later, which would be made by the Sixth Army Group under the Ninth's former commander,

The Plan

A more comprehensive study of the VII Corps plan of invasion shows that, although considered the least difficult of the two American landings, its mission was equally as important. Upon the actions of this command rested Allied success in attaining both initial objectives of the whole scheme.

First of all, the Corps was to cut the Cotentin Peninsula. That would cut off the enemy to the north and pave the way for capture of Cherbourg, the only major port on the invasion peninsula. With the capture of this city and its fine harbor, the ingenious and hazardous Allied temporary wharf and harbor installations (made up of sunken ships and towed-in piers) would cease to be the only source of supply for the assaulting units.

Moreover, fulfillment of the Corps mission would give the Allies a firm hold on the continent of Europe and would end the first phase of the invasion. In regard to enemy morale, such a victory would demonstrate once again to the German army that it was not ***invincible.***

It is significant that the *Veteran* Ninth Infantry Division later would cut the peninsula for VII Corps, and would be a major factor in the capture of Cherbourg—which aided in giving General Collins his great Normandy victory.

General Devers. Meanwhile, Allied forces in Italy would wage a massive counter-offensive and detract as much enemy power as possible during and preceding *OVERLORD.* Over one and a half million men of the U.S. Army were to be involved in the western landing—both in the invasion itself, and in reserve and supporting forces. That called for many thousands of invasion craft and transports, for there was the British Expeditionary Force to transport as well. It called for the greatest armada in history and for a steady and prodigious stream of supplies from America.

Only 29 divisions were available initially to General Eisenhower during the first part of the Battle for France, as against the 75 possessed by the enemy in the west. However, the American and British Divisions were of greater individual strength than those of the enemy, and the defenders had to spread their forces along many possible points of entrance. Thus the landings were to be effected with but nine divisions—five of these going ashore on *D-Day.*

First Army initially had control of all American troops on the beachhead. Its VII Corps was to land at *Utah Beach,* push west across the base of the Cotentin Peninsula, and after severing it, capture the major part of Cherbourg to the north. Meanwhile, its V Corps would storm ashore at *Omaha Beach,* push inland and south, protecting the flank of the VII Corps and connecting with the British and Canadians on the left flank. After the Normandy area was secured the newly-arrived Third Army (Patton) would break out and sweep around to Brittany. In the Caen sector the British initially were to act as a *hinge,* and then push out with the Americans.

> *On the other side of the fence, the German High Command was confident that its admittedly good army once more would be able to "pull chestnuts out of the fire."*

The Ninth Division, as part of the VII Corps, originally did not have a large part in the opening phase. It was planned that the Ninth would land on D-plus-four and be in reserve, used as a special striking force. The Ninth Division was to be one of the two American divisions with previous combat experience to participate in the invasion—the other being the 1st Infantry Division, old-corps partner of the Ninth and now part of V Corps.

Suffice it to say, the Ninth had problems in mounting its forces for the invasion. But at this time, the

INVASION ADVICE

Division fast was reaching a peak of performance. Most of its troops had gone through all the campaigns with the Ninth. Its leadership was experienced and battle-wise; its soldiers knew what to expect. There had not been too many casualties in the Division, and the original team was still carrying the ball.

* * * *

IT WAS on May 27, 1944—just after 6:30 A.M.—that the Ninth was given a 6-hour alert . . . and events began to happen swiftly. There was little chance for any prolonged goodbyes or last minute business. Once again, *this was it* . . . the journey into the unknown. Everywhere throughout the Division area preparations were rushed to completion. Necessary clothing and equipment were set aside and the remainder tossed into barracks bags, duffle bags, boxes and foot-lockers—to be seen again or maybe not. There were a million and one things which *could* be done now, tasks which had waited too long. All except letter-writing and preparation for sailing had to wait.

On Saturday, June 3rd, the weather was warm and clear, and all roads to the Southampton marshalling areas were jam-packed with vehicles carrying men in olive drab and forest green. The twenty-mile ride from the Ninth Division zone to the staging area took several hours . . . long, tedious hours for those on *6-By* trucks. By rail and by motor the Ninth rolled into Southampton and Weymouth, prepared to load on *D-Day*.

Meanwhile, several preliminaries had taken place. With the muffled tension of veterans who know what to expect, unit commanders issued last minute instructions. Old-timers cautioned ***rookies*** and a few wisecracks were made about unimportant things, to keep up any sagging spirits. Several advance groups were to precede the main body of the Division and prepare for its entry into combat. These boarded their craft first, to be followed by the Division as a whole after *D-Day*.

H-Hour arrived early on June 6th and there was morning prayer for those who were at that very moment making the supreme sacrifice on *the far shore*. Now men of the *Octofoil* began loading and finding places on board their transports. They had listened attentively to every scrap of information regarding the landings, although most men had been kept in the necessary official darkness which comes before an invasion.

Through the vast bridge of ships sailed the Division on June 7th. The 84th Field Artillery left from Weymouth; the 60th Infantry departed from Dorchester; and the remainder of the Ninth said goodbye to England from the port of Southampton. For the rough channel crossing the Ninth Division had been split into many small groups. In all, 47 *Liberty* ships, 8 LST's and 12 LCT's carried its men, with portions of other units also aboard the same vessels. Most of these soldiers had much in common. They were leaving an enjoyable land and embarking upon a campaign against one of the greatest military machines in the history of warfare. And they left "with a heavy heart."

Men of the Ninth looked back upon the memorable days which were slipping out of their lives. In reminiscing they thought of Winchester, its Guildhall, King Alfred's statue, the little bridge beyond which led up the hill . . . they thought of *mild and bitter, tea* and *scones, chips* and waiting for double-decker buses. Many things crossed the minds of these soldiers and most of their thoughts of the past were pleasant ones.

Now a greater thought entered many heads . . . *what of the future?* General Eisenhower had something to say about that in his order of the day, on June 6th. It summed up the past and predicted the future:

"Soldiers, sailors and airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force:

"You are about to embark upon the great crusade toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving peoples everywhere march with you.

"You will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe and security for ourselves in a free world.

"Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well-equipped and battle-hardened. He will fight, fight savagely.

"But this is the year 1944. Much has happened since the Nazi triumphs of 1940-41.

"The United Nations have inflicted upon the Germans great defeat in open battle man to man. Our air offensive has seriously reduced their strength in the air and their capacity to wage war on the ground.

"Our home fronts have given us an overwhelming superiority in weapons and munitions of war and placed at our disposal great reserves of trained fighting men.

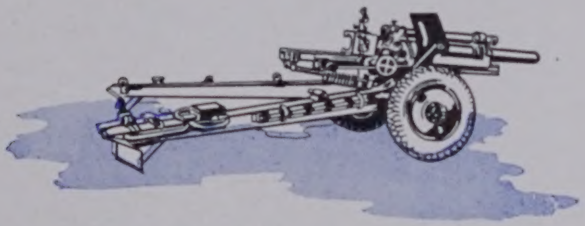
"The tide has turned.

"The free men of the world are marching together to victory. I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty and skill in battle.

"We will accept nothing less than full victory.

"Good luck, and let us all beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking."

That told the story, and the Ninth could do naught but comply!



Section VI Photography Credits: Pages 146, 150, 151 (Top), 153 by Author; 151 (Bottom), 155 are Official U.S. Army Signal Corps Photos; 154, 158, 159 by 15th Engineers; 156 by 39th Infantry.

Section VII

INVASION--The fight rejoined

Normandy

GERMANY received her long-awaited answer to, "Let them come!" on June 6, 1944. Her supposedly impenetrable *Atlantic Wall* was pierced, smashed and opened forever by the very men she had hoped to enslave. Not only did this invasion proclaim that the liberation of France had begun, and that the Nazi nightmare of world conquest was due for a rude awakening—but *D-Day* meant something more. It rekindled the feebly burning torch of freedom in the hearts and homes and hopes of millions of Europeans . . . and insured that millions more would not die in slavery.

Far-reaching consequences can be attributed to the Allied bridgehead on the shores of Normandy. Russia's lot certainly was made much easier, and assured of success. On the eastern front, a great Soviet counter-offensive was launched almost simultaneously with the opening of this *second front*. Actually, there had been two-front warfare since the North African landings in 1942; the battle begun in Africa simply had moved northward, through Sicily to Italy. Invasion of France meant, therefore, that Hitler was faced with a *three*-front war—his back was against the wall. Yet the fanatical Nazi *Fuehrer* appeared to have every hope of success—even as his armies recoiled from Rome and the Cotentin Peninsula of Normandy . . . and he had good reason.

Whatever could be said against the moral and ethical aspects of the German *Wehrmacht,* was counter-balanced equally by the excellent manner in which this army had performed. And realizing that defeat of such a military machine rested upon the cunning and superiority of its opponents, Allied planners long since had evolved a two-fold plan. First of all, deception was to be employed to its fullest. This was evidenced by the air forces of the Allies—which thoroughly confused the enemy as to the intended beachhead area—and by the modern and unique equipment which landed men and materiel during the first crucial weeks of the invasion. Superiority was obtained by having soldiers who were better man for man, who were supplied with finer weapons and mastery of the air.

Nazidom's military clique had anticipated landings in the Pas-de-Calais area, and had placed its manpower accordingly. *Dover to Calais* always had been considered the normal invasion route from England, since Calais offered fine initial harbor facilities. For weeks and months Allied aircraft had flown diversionary sorties over this area, as well as against the Normandy beaches. At the same time, wave after wave of planes unleashed their strings of bombs upon possible *rocket-launching* sites, which were being constructed along the coasts of Northern France. All this aerial deception served to convince the enemy that his conception of the landings was correct.

D-Day portended the complete success of the aerial phase. With his forces initially thrown off

Operation Neptune

(First Army Plan for *Operation Overlord*)

The general plan of attack called for a simultaneous landing on two main beaches. The VII Corps, with the 4th Infantry Division making the assault by sea and assisted by the 82nd Airborne Division and the 101st Airborne Division landing in the rear of the German coastal defenses, was to establish a beachhead in the neighborhood of Varreville, near the southern portion of the east coast of the Cotentin Peninsula. The V Corps, with one combat team of the 29th Infantry Division on the right and one combat team of the 1st Infantry Division on the left, all under the command of the 1st Division, was to establish a beachhead on the northern coast of Calvados near St-Laurent-sur-Mer.

—*First Army Report of Operations*

balance the enemy reeled and pivoted to meet the attack—half-expecting other thrusts to be tried to the north. Then when the full impact was realized as being aimed against the Normandy coast, the German high command attempted to rectify its error of judgment. But the foe's rail and highway transportation (carrying reinforcements) was disrupted by the Ninth Air Force's fighter-bombers, and his coastal defenses were unable to stem the tide.

The enemy played for time, as only time gained by delaying action could have saved him on the peninsula . . . but he was pressed hard and beaten back. The deception by air, the tenacious force of arms brought to bear within the first week by land, and the ingenious landing and unloading facilities by sea defeated him in Normandy's first phase.

* * * *

IT WAS June 10, 1944—D-plus four. To the front was *Utah Beach;* down the shore to the left stretched *Omaha,* where so many gallant men of the 1st and 29th Divisions had paid the supreme price for freedom. Beyond *Omaha Beach* were the British and Canadians—driving on the German strongpoint of Caen.

As the heavily-laden transports, LCT's and LST's made their way through the danger zone, the approaching beach grew larger in size. Ships were everywhere, vessels of all types. Some had foundered, some were anchored and still others had become victims of enemy action. *Omaha* had most of the half-afloat, half-sunken boats; *Utah* was the better organized.

The 4th Infantry Division had landed on *D-Day* and pushed rapidly inland to join forces with the 82nd Airborne Division. Paratroopers of the 82nd had dropped from the skies during the first hours of the 6th, and with their fellow jumpers of the 101st Airborne—fighting to the south—had gone astride the river areas and opened routes of advance. Remains of gliders were everywhere . . . as well as bodies of those who had resisted their landings.

Up and down the VII Corps beach were the men of the 1st Engineer Special Brigade—they were the invasion's room clerks and work horses, who welcomed new tenants onto the soil of France and evacuated the dead and wounded. Confusion was present, but seemed less on land than it did in the seaborne ferrying of men and materiel, weapons and vehicles. Many landing craft had become *dried out* (beached to permit unloading) and the once-light sand had taken on a dirty appearance.

Utah Beach was practically flat, but the enemy had extended his *Atlantic Wall* to make up for this deficit of nature. Paralleling the sea was a wall of masonry, which ran for about 10,000 yards and was fortified by a system of revolving tank turrets set upon concrete bases. These fortifications were known as *Tobruk Pits.* Barbed wires, machine guns, uncountable numbers of mines and other defensive measures had been used by the Germans to halt an invasion . . . and had failed. Behind the wall and running almost as parallel was the *Beach Road*—dusty, hot and not too good in spots. But it did connect with Ste. Mere Eglise, Quineville, Montebourg, Valognes and the rest of France.

From Quineville south, and about fifty yards from the beach began an inundation caused by the Germans' blocking of many small streams; this marshland widened out to two miles in some areas. Beyond the initially barren coastline sprawled the famous *Bocage* (hedgerow) country of France, a well-vegetated and rolling land, which was admirably suited for defense. Its streams, fields and hedgerows were natural aids for the enemy.

Because of the obstacles of inundation, General Collins had to fight his VII Corps down a narrow corridor. Two main roads led over the Douve River and to the west coast. One went through Ste. Colombe and the other rolled through the road-center town of St. Sauveur-le-Vicomte. After obtaining elbow room for maneuvering the Corps would attempt to push west to cut the peninsula and then finish off the enemy to the north. Simultaneously, its troops were to strive for capture of Carentan and a linkup with the V Corps to the south.

It was June 10th and there was a steady stream of wide-eyed soldiers sloshing ashore. The newly-committed 90th Division was having its first taste of combat and the veteran Ninth had begun to unload on schedule. Action was in the air.

* * * *

UTAH BEACH: NINTHMEN PUSH INLAND AFTER LANDING

WHETHER it was the excitement of the moment or the desire to land as soon as possible, only the ships' masters could tell. At any rate the many vessels which carried the Ninth Infantry Division across the channel had arrived twenty-four hours early, and they sat at anchor during the night of June 9-10. A *welcome* was extended to the Division by enemy batteries, which shelled anything they could.

Orders were given to disembark the first Ninth Division elements on Saturday morning the 10th. It took several days to unload the entire Division and required a great deal of initiative, patience and skill on the part of some commanding officers, who *borrowed* landing craft to haul their men beachward. By the 11th the 39th Infantry was almost completely ashore; and although some of its transportation and supporting weapons were missing, the regiment was ready for combat. That was exactly what awaited the *Falcons*.

It was not long after he had landed that Colonel *Paddy* Flint was called to the Division C.P. Major Generals Eddy and Raymond O. Barton greeted the *Falcon* commander, and immediately laid their cards upon the table. They just had returned from a conference with the Corps commander . . . the 39th had a special mission. General Barton's 4th Infantry Division was experiencing difficulty in advancing north against the strong fortifications before Quineville; and as a consequence, General Collins had attached the 39th Infantry to the 4th Division.

The *AAA-O* men were to assist the 4th in destroying the line of forts from Taret de Ravenoville to Quineville. A great deal depended upon this operation, since enemy batteries along the beach were endangering the unloading of supplies. Speed and tenacity were necessary . . . and *Paddy* Flint went out to tell his *boys* the news.

Little time was wasted by the 39th. On June 12th —in the first action of a Ninth Division unit on the continent of Europe—the regiment launched a powerful attack, ably supported by the 34th and 60th

Artillery Battalions. Veteran *Falcons* of the 2nd Battalion soon swept through Crisbecq and Dangueville, and Lt. Colonel Robert H. Stumpf's 3rd Battalion overcame stubborn resistance to push the Germans out of Fontenay-sur-Mer. Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion fought its way toward Ravenoville and St. Marcouf, contacting the shore engineers to its right and thrusting forward to assault and capture the first pillbox north of Taret de Ravenoville. A link-up was made with the 2nd Battalion (Lt. Colonel James W. Lockett) about 3,000 yards north of this fortification on the beach below Fort St. Marcouf . . . and the first day of combat ended.

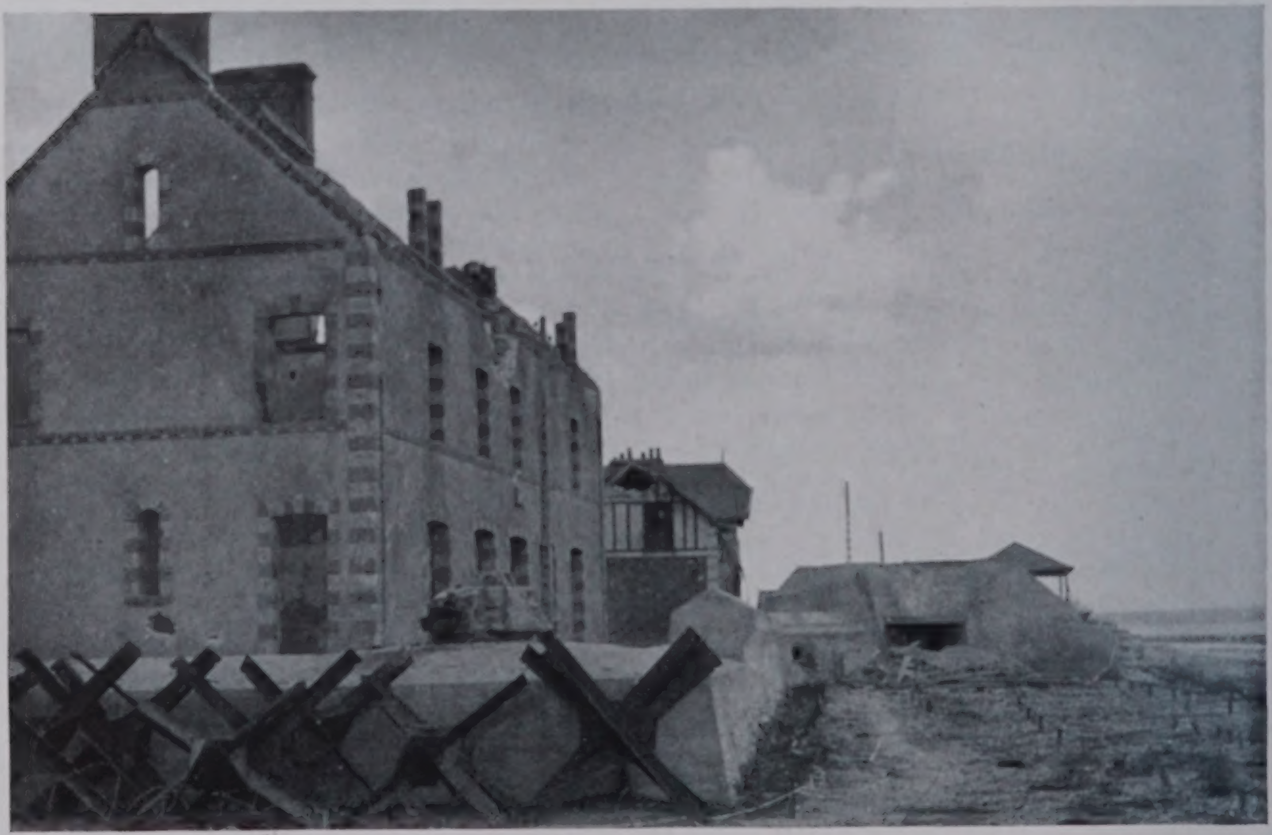
Victory in these skirmishes was heartening; however, there were many losses. It was during this fight that Lt. Colonel Philip C. Tinley, commanding the 1st Battalion, was killed—the first Ninth Division battalion commander to die in action on the continent. He was replaced by Major (Lt. Colonel) Henry P. Tucker.

On the 12th as well the 22nd Infantry in a spirited and murderous bayonet assault cleared Azeville. But its drive was held up, because of German possession of Montebourg . . . and could be continued only by capturing the ridge west of Quineville.

* * * *

AT THIS point the 39th made invasion history; for *Paddy* Flint had obtained permission to send his 3rd Battalion alone against Quineville. Following a devastating air attack made by *A-20's*, the 3rd jumped into the assault. It was 4 P.M. on the 13th and Company *K* was leading. At first the company moved rapidly, capturing prisoners enroute. Upon reaching the first street intersection of Quineville the unit split up, with its assaulting 3rd Platoon

QUINEVILLE WAS ENEMY STRONGPOINT



going right, toward the beach, and its 1st Platoon heading toward the northeast.

The 3rd Platoon met fire from an anti-tank gun of a beach pillbox; at the same time a German came out, waving a white surrender flag. In Africa and in Sicily many Ninthmen had met death by such a ruse, so one veteran GI opened up on the German with automatic rifle fire and an important battle had begun. The enemy replied with everything he had, forcing the platoon to withdraw to the intersection. Crews of the Weapons Platoon rushed in to assist the 1st Platoon with mortar and machine-gun fire; however, the fire from the fortifications was too great and the machine guns had to displace to safer positions.

A request for artillery support was granted, but this fire was falling too close to friendly troops. Higher headquarters stopped the concentrations and once again the assaulting infantry was in sore need of heavy weapons. Colonel Stumpf called for his supporting tanks and only one came up. That was meager aid which the Germans soon disposed of.

Undaunted by his first loss, the commander of the disabled tank came back with two more vehicles which acted as roving artillery, coordinating with the infantry to clean out machine-gun nests and other strongpoints. But once more the armored efforts were halted; this time when American artillery—for some reason—laid down smoke. The tankers could not see and were forced to leave.

The situation was desperate . . . until the day was saved by Staff Sergeant Bruce Perry, Jr., and his squad from the 3rd Platoon. They had worked down along the beach, going through houses and around walls, peppering the enefy with constant fire as they advanced and forcing him to stay within his concrete protection. The brave infantrymen attacked the pillboxes with automatic weapons and bazookas . . . by themselves, everyone else having withdrawn!

Company *K* sent a patrol to contact Perry and order him back to safety. But the desired effect had been made; what had appeared momentarily to be an American defeat was turned into an overwhelming victory. The Germans, convinced of the 39th's superiority by virtue of this vigorous attack, surrendered at 9:30 P.M. One hundred of the enemy gave up to Company *K*, which itself had suffered 5 killed and 28 wounded in capturing the town.

German General Hellmich had been ordered to hold the position at all costs, and now that it was lost, his superior—General Marcks—was convinced that the capture of Cherbourg was fated.

That evening the 1st Battalion was dispatched to complete the task of cleaning up the coastal defenses. It suffered many casualties while crossing a mine field to assault Fort St. Marcouf. But with this final capture the coast and Quineville were freed of the enemy; the 39th Infantry had advanced the farthest north of any Allied troops at that time, and it had silenced the last German guns on the beach. Allied supplies and troops for *Utah* were able to land at three times their previous speed, and the stage was set for a Corps drive to the west.

The attack on Quineville had been preceded by a great air bombardment, two hours after which the regiment was scheduled to advance over the Merderet River marshes. As the hour approached, the Army commander phoned to inquire if all were ready. "Paddy Flint and two companies have been in the center of town two hours," came the astounding reply.

—Thomas R. Henry (Washington (D.C.) STAR)

* * * *

THE Ninth Division originally had been scheduled to go into an assembly area near Colomby-Orglandes and then move northwest. When the Division landed, however, this position still was in German hands and the 90th Division was stalled to the front. It was now that General Collins made a fateful decision. He planned to commit the veteran Ninth immediately, having it fight through the 90th and then seize the Corps objectives to the west.

Although the Ninth had not landed completely by the 13th, it was alerted for entry into battle on the following day. From its narrow sector the Division was to drive to the west, crossing the Douve River so as to block off the Cotentin Peninsula west of the Prairies Marecageuses (a marshland). The plan was to have the 60th Infantry attack in a column of battalions and break out. Then the 90th Infantry

Division would turn to the northwest and attack abreast of the Ninth on the northern flank. The 82nd Airborne Division was to the south.

Colonel de Rohan's 60th Infantry went into battle at 10 A.M. on June 14th. Scattered opposition from slowly retreating Germans was dealt with as it arose, and the assault progressed fairly well. Near Renouf enemy resistance tightened up, forcing Divarty to saturate the town with shellfire before the infantry could move in. Gradually the drive regained momentum; the 2nd Battalion (followed by the 3rd) sped west from Renouf and halted along the high ground north of La Bonneville. Meanwhile, the 47th Infantry had dispatched its first patrols of the invasion toward Gourbesville—as darkness held up further Ninth Division advances that night.

As June 15th began the enemy was retreating along a 12-mile corridor in the face of a devastating advance by the 60th and 47th Infantry Regiments. Reliable reports indicated that the Germans were bringing a new division to reinforce their sector in front of the Ninth Division. For this reason General Eddy ordered the attack continued immediately, so as to obtain all the advantages possible before any stubborn resistance developed. The *Raider* 1st Battalion was attached temporarily to the 60th, and together they moved out.

This drive was less than three hours old when the 90th Division reported that German tanks were moving south. Rocket launchers and anti-tank guns of the 60th C.T. went into action soon afterward, forcing 16 tanks to retreat toward Orglandes. One hour following receipt of the warning the skirmish was over, and *Go-Devil* losses were only two anti-tank pieces.

Meanwhile, the 39th Infantry—fresh from triumphs with the 4th Division—replaced the 47th in reserve . . . and the Ninth was able to operate at full strength again. Previously, the heights west of Orglandes had been the mission of the *Go-Devils;* but with the return of the 39th, this area was redesignated as the objective of the *Raiders* and the 60th was given the town of Reigneville for its target.

Leap-frogging at its best was exemplified by the 60th during the hours which followed this change. Its 1st Battalion had passed through the 2nd and was preparing to launch an attack when an enemy battalion, supported by four tanks, counterattacked and hurled back the 1st for 500 yards, causing many American casualties. Quickly, the regrouped 2nd Battalion leaped over the 1st and drove back the Germans . . . not stopping until it had captured the regimental objective of Reigneville! Here the battalion halted and awaited the arrival of the 47th on line at 8 P.M.

During June 16th the Ninth received the important assignment of cutting the Cotentin Peninsula . . . one of the two important objectives of the First Army. The Division had received its first attached regiment of the campaign too, the 259th infantry (minus one battalion) which had joined the Ninth after 8 P.M. on the night of the 15th. For extra fire power there were the 4.2 mortars of the 87th Chemical Battalion, the big guns of the 915th Field Artillery and the mobile support of the 746th Tank Battalion, which continued its role as roving artillery and tank destroyer.

The mission of the Division was to cross the Douve and cut off the Cotentin Peninsula, capturing intermediate objectives enroute. The 82nd Airborne was on the left and the 90th was on the right.

General Collins had instructed the Ninth to use the 47th and 60th Combat Teams in a hard drive to Ste. Colombe, while the 39th turned and protected the flanks. Carrying out that plan, the Ninth's commander ordered all three of the 60th's battalions on line and directed them to advance on the River Douve. The 60th moved out at 5 A.M., the 47th a half hour later, and at 11 A.M. the 39th jumped off. In the lead, the 60th's infantry pushed ahead, while other Division units protected and cleared the flanks. The 3rd Battalion of the 60th hit medium opposition, making "excellent progress." Colonel de Rohan committed the 2nd Battalion at 11 A.M. and this unit quickly chopped west to Ste. Colombe, where it captured the Douve bridges intact. Colonel George W. Smythe's *Raiders* strove to capture the high ground east of Ste. Colombe but met a great deal of resistance, for the enemy was on his last high ground before the Douve. Rear guard elements delayed the capture of heights at Hauteville-Bocage, and the 47th did not reach the St. Sauveur-Valognes road until dark.

* * * *

RUMORS occur in battle just as they do on transports and in barracks washrooms. Somebody had started a rumor that the 2nd Battalion of the 60th had not advanced, or that it was lost. Actually what had happened was that the unit had so far outdistanced the rest of the Division that it was nowhere to be seen . . . the battalion was over the Douve.

It was a costly crossing and required more intestinal fortitude than the Germans had seen in many a day. Company *E* was the first over followed by Company *F*. They both had met machine-gun fire prior to crossing from the heights beyond Reigneville, but Company *E* piled aboard the tanks of Company *B*, 746th Tank Battalion, and started across the river bed.

The first two bridges over the three parallel streams were taken, but the third was out and continuation of vehicular transportation was impossible. With most of the battalion on the causeway, the enemy poured withering shell fire from Nehou and sprayed the advancing *Go-Devils* with small arms fire.

The armor was forced to *back-track,* since there was no means of crossing the third stream. Lacking supporting fire and barely holding its bridgehead on the far shore, the 2nd was subjected to several strong counterattacks by the enemy. German self-propelled artillery, small arms, machine guns and mortars pounded the game battalion. But the infantrymen held out by sheer courage and determination . . . needing assistance badly and almost running out of ammunition.

Just before dusk the 3rd Battalion arrived, and the badly-mauled and weary men of the 2nd were deliriously happy. Shortly thereafter the 1st Battalion made the east bank, after having worked through a day of fire fights . . . and by nine o'clock that night the bridgehead was well established. Meanwhile, the enemy was receiving another jolt to the south.

As the Ninth Division was storming the Douve to the north, the 82nd Airborne was enjoying a similar success to the south. The 82nd had crossed the river at St. Sauveur-le-Vicomte and opened a bridgehead, which now furnished the VII Corps with two routes to the west.

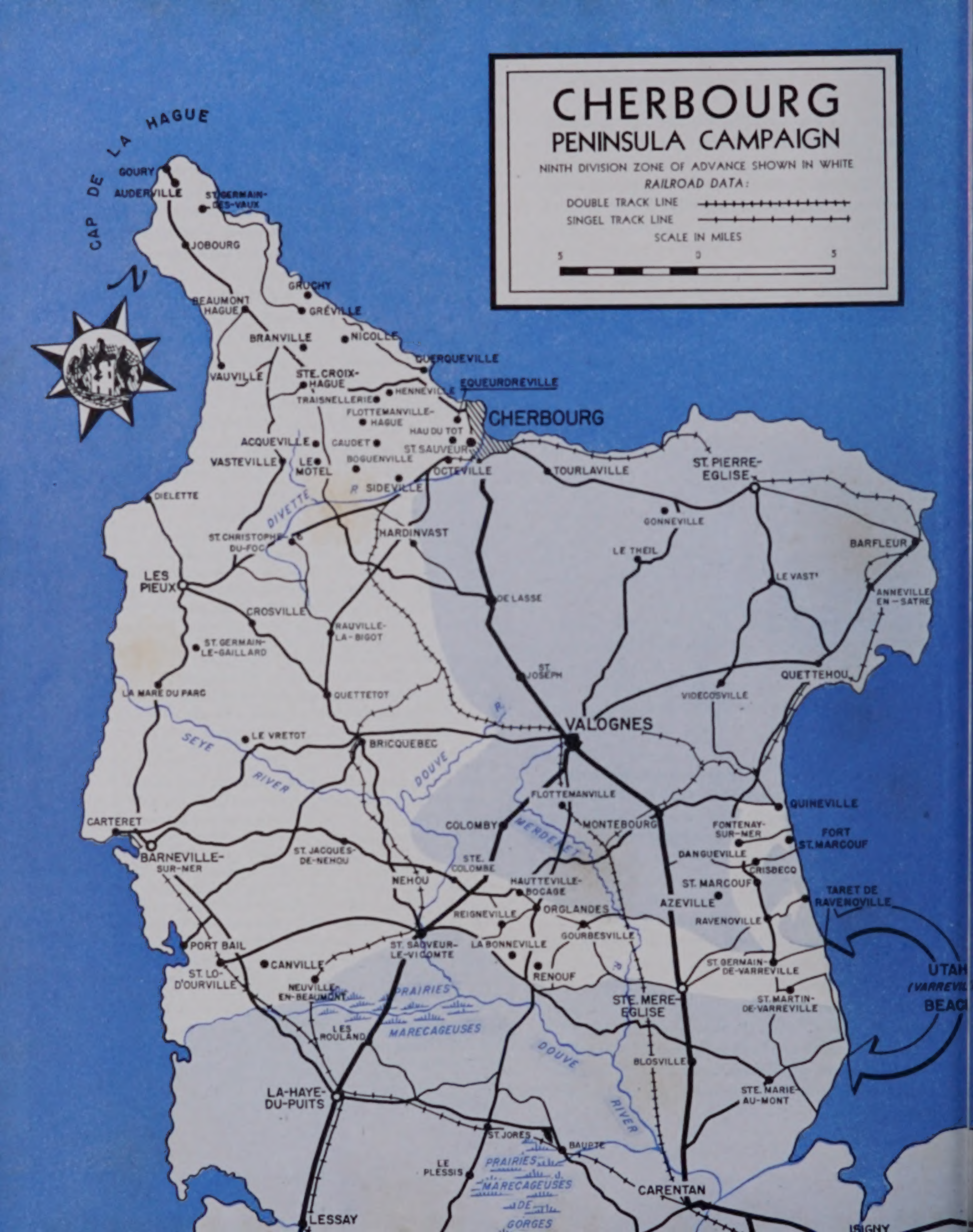
Infantry of the crack U.S. Ninth Division, blooded in Africa and Italy, is fighting its way tonight onto the high ground commanding the last North-South highway on the peninsula . . . The stamina and endurance of these men, as well as their march and firing line discipline is remarkable.

—Harold Denny (New York TIMES)

The crossing of the Douve began one of the most successful phases of the Ninth Division's many cam-

Distinguished Unit Citation

The *2nd Battalion, 60th Infantry,* is cited for extraordinary gallantry in action on 16 June 44, in the vicinity of Ste. Colombe, France. Early on 16 June, the *2nd Battalion, 60th Infantry,* on the left flank of the 9th Infantry Division in the attack, stormed the German defenses, overran their objective in the face of heavy German mortar and machine-gun fire, and proceeded to cut the main highway to the northwest. During this drive the enemy fought desperately to prevent a break-through, but the battalion advanced well out in front of the remainder of the division, thereby losing contact with the units on its right and left. Instead of withdrawing to a safer position, the battalion commander, realizing the urgency of securing a bridgehead west of the Douve River as quickly as possible, continued the advance of his battalion beyond its assigned objective. Gaining a foothold on the western bank of the Douve River by attacking across an exposed causeway and the adjacent marshlands west of Ste. Colombe, the battalion continued to hold this precarious position for 7 hours until reinforced by other elements of the 9th Infantry Division. During those 7 hours this valiant unit was subjected to intense small-arms, mortar and artillery fire, reinforced by the fire of tanks from the high ground on the west bank of the river, as the enemy made many fierce but futile attempts to force them back. The daring action of the *2nd Battalion, 60th Infantry,* in advancing far beyond its objective and crossing the Douve River in the face of the stiffest enemy resistance was a major factor in the success of the VII Corps in the rapid cutting of the Cherbourg Peninsula and the speedy capture of Cherbourg, and exemplifies the aggressive spirit of every man in this unit.



CHERBOURG PENINSULA CAMPAIGN

NINTH DIVISION ZONE OF ADVANCE SHOWN IN WHITE

RAILROAD DATA:
DOUBLE TRACK LINE
SINGEL TRACK LINE
SCALE IN MILES
5
0
5
CAP DE LA HAGUE
N
GOURY
AUDERVILLE
ST. GERMAIN-DES-VAUX
JOBOURG
GRUCHY
GRÉVILLE
BEAUMONT HAGUE
BRANVILLE
NICOLLE
VAUVILLE
STE. CROIX-HAGUE
QUERQUEVILLE
EQUEURDREVILLE
HENNEVILLE
TRAISNELLERIE
FLOTTEMANVILLE-HAGUE
CHERBOURG
HAU DU TOT
ACQUEVILLE
CAUDET
ST. SAUVEUR
VASTEVILLE
LE MOTEL
BOGUENVILLE
OCTEVILLE
TOURLAVILLE
ST. PIERRE-EGLISE
SIDEVILLE
R. DIVETTE
DIELETTE
GONNEVILLE
ST. CHRISTOPHE-DU-FOC
HARDINVAST
LE THEIL
BARFLEUR
LES PIEUX
LE VAST
DE LASSE
ANNEVILLE-EN-SATRE
CROSVILLE
RAUVILLE-LA-BIGOT
ST. GERMAIN-LE-GAILLARD
ST. JOSEPH
QUETTEHOU
LA MARE DU PARC
QUETTETOT
VIDECOSVILLE
R.
VALOGNES
SEYE RIVER
LE VRETOT
BRICQUEBEC
DOUVE
FLOTTEMANVILLE
QUINEVILLE
CARTERET
COLOMBY
MERDERET
MONTEBOURG
FONTENAY-SUR-MER
FORT ST. MARCOUF
BARNEVILLE-SUR-MER
ST. JACQUES-DE-NEHOU
STE. COLOMBE
DANGUEVILLE
CRISBECQ
NEHOU
HAUTTEVILLE-BOCAGE
ST. MARCOUF
TARET DE RAVENOVILLE
AZEVILLE
REIGNEVILLE
ORGLANDES
RAVENOVILLE
GOURBESVILLE
PORT BAIL
ST. SAUVEUR-LE-VICOMTE
LA BONNEVILLE
ST. GERMAIN-DE-VARREVILLE
UTAH (VARREVIL BEACH
CANVILLE
RENOUF
R.
ST. LO-D'OURVILLE
NEUVILLE-EN-BEAUMONT
PRAIRIES MARECAGEUSES
STE. MERE-EGLISE
ST. MARTIN-DE-VARREVILLE
LES ROULAND
DOUVE RIVER
BLOSVILLE
LA-HAYE-DU-PUITS
STE. MARIE-AU-MONT
ST. JORES
BAUPTE
LE PLESSIS
PRAIRIES MARECAGEUSES DE GORGES
CARENTAN
LESSAY
ISIGNY

paigns . . . a period when the eyes of the world became focused upon the veteran victors of Bizerte. June 17th witnessed another historic and exciting episode, as the Ninth plunged forward to seal the fate of the enemy to the north. Credit for this feat belongs to the 1st Battalion of the 47th Infantry, which cut the La Haye-du-Puits—Barneville-sur-Mer road near St. Lo-D'Ourville at 10 P.M., thus blocking the last remaining route of escape or reinforcement for the German forces and severing the Cotentin Peninsula.

In recalling the warfare of Normandy, it is well to remember that most fighting continued until 11 P.M. daily, because of British *double-summertime* which set the clocks ahead two hours. During the late evening of the 16th—after the fighting for that day had ceased—the 47th Infantry had been directed to move southwest and pass through the bridgehead of the tired 82nd Airborne Division at St. Sauveur-le-Vicomte. The *Raiders,* who were then on the right flank of the 60th, cut back behind that regiment and proceeded to carry out their orders.

The 47th's column, led by the 3rd Battalion, was leaving St. Sauveur when direct anti-tank, machine-gun and rifle fire halted its movement. While the 3rd engaged the Germans along the main route to the west, a reconnaisance was made of a road just to the north of that highway and Colonel Smythe sent the 2nd Battalion, followed by the 1st over this alternate route.

Rapid progress was made by the 2nd during the 17th and the battalion reached its Hill 40 objective early that evening. Here the 1st Battalion leap-frogged over the 2nd, and shortly afterward occupied Grande-de-Haunville, which cut the peninsula and accomplished the first major objective of the compaign. After a day of strenuous and almost continuous fighting, the 3rd Battalion battled south to close in on its objective as darkness fell, thus completing the block and securing the eastern end of the corridor.

To the east the 39th Infantry was engaged in an important but less spectacular task. With excellent support of artillery and mortar fire, the *Falcons* assaulted and captured Orglandes. Then the regiment moved to the right of the Division, to protect that flank until the 90th Division advanced far enough along to be on line with the Ninth.

The 60th Infantry had fighter-plane cover during first hours of daylight and advanced rapidly to the high ground above the Bricquebec-Barneville road by nightfall. Nehou fell as the regiment climbed the heights to take Hills 145 and 133, which dominated the entire area.

* * * *

IT WAS on the night of the 17th that General Eddy upon meeting and passing the 60th C.P. on the road declared, "We're going all the way tonight!" The regiment did—to the coast. Further to insure the separation, both the 47th and 60th assaulted to the sea without letup. The *Raiders* were first (by a hair's breadth) to reach the Atlantic, when they hit Port Bail and Neuville-en-Beaumont during the morning of June 18th.

At approximately the same time Company *K* of the 60th was loaded on tanks and tank destroyers . . . bound for Barneville and followed by the remainder of the 3rd Battalion. Despite strongly defended emplacements the Germans were forced to withdraw. Realizing the importance of their lost positions, however, they came back with armor in a strong counterattack. Company *K* retaliated with its rocket launchers and anti-tank grenades; and the tanks and tank destroyers which had acted as transports for the attack aided the company to rout the enemy completely. Taking Barneville-sur-Mer placed double insurance upon the cutting of the peninsula, since the 47th was at that very moment consolidating its positions around Port Bail.

BARNEVILLE

After routing hundreds of Germans near Canville, the 47th was relieved by the 90th Division's 357th Infantry Regiment and the *Raiders* headed "up the coastal highway toward Les Pieux." The American advance to the sea had been rapid, so rapid that when the 47th received its orders for the day it already had taken those objectives!

Meanwhile, as the 1st Battalion of

the 39th Infantry moved to St. Jacques-de-Nehou to begin its well-remembered protection of the 60th's north and rear, a deluge of praise from the press began to be heaped upon the Ninth Division:

> *To the north, the 9th Division had taken Nehou . . . . the 82nd was too spent to exploit its breakthrough. So while one regiment of the 9th pushed from Nehou, through St. Jacques, another regiment passed the tired 82nd, pushed through St. Sauveur in a parallel thrust . . . The 9th had gained twelve and one-half miles in two days—the fastest advance of the campaign . . . The 9th had done the job; Cherbourg was sealed off.*
>
> —*TIME*

> *Omar Bradley has done it again. Slipping stronger units past the lines of their tiring comrades, he once more smashed unexpectedly through the Germans to cut off Cherbourg, just as he broke through to doom Bizerte, a little over a year ago. And he used the same outfit—the battle-tested Ninth Division—to strike the decisive blow . . . The blow that broke the Nazi's back below Cherbourg was a clever one and aroused real enthusiasm.*
>
> —*Capt. Lowell M. Limpus (New York NEWS)*

Reaching the sea did not stop the fighting. Three fanatical German counterattacks demonstrated the enemy's desire to crash the pocket and get to the *mainland*. These onslaughts occurred during the 18th, and the Ninth Division performed with professional skill in successfully repelling each thrust.

German forces had been split into two groups; one to retreat upon the Cherbourg area and create an impasse, the other to smash through to the south and out of the peninsula. Each of these commands had a definite task and the valueless blessing of Hitler. With typical Nazi fanaticism almost two divisions attempted to cut through the flank and rear of the Ninth Division.

Desperate and bold, the Germans tried their first counterattack against the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 60th Infantry, when a long column of vehicles pushed down the Bricquebec-Barneville road. It was the motorized German 77th Division. In scenes reminiscent of its magnificent stand at Thala, the artillery supporting the 60th opened fire.

Using the crossroads to its front as a registering point, the artillery gave surprised Germans an unusual counterattack. All the guns and weapons of the Division Artillery and the 60th Infantry Regiment hastily were focused upon the oncoming foe. Beginning at the crossroads, an overwhelmingly fierce artillery mission rained down upon the column. Inch by inch, with the precision of a Swiss watch, the artillery crept by successive concentrations until it had reached a point five miles northwest of the crossroads.

Infantry weapons including the anti-tank guns, poured death and destruction where the artillery was unable to cover. Later reconnaissance proved both the accuracy and the terrifying results of this coordinated concentration. At intervals of one-tenth of a mile, howitzers, trucks, prime movers, horses, mortars, half-tracks, bicycles, and all the other wheeled vehicles of a German division were demolished. This went on for five miles. At four and nine-tenths miles the destruction had been so complete that debris made the road impassable.

Germans who had survived this withering barrage withdrew and scattered, only to band together with other troops and attempt another breakthrough to the south. This second counterattack against the 60th Infantry was spiked similarly.

Roadblocks had been established along the Seye River by the *Go-Devils*—designed to cover lines of communications. The two westernmost blocks were constructed on a highway which led south out of Bricquebec. Bridges had been mined and a platoon of anti-tank-weapons men, as well as two squads of the 60th's anti-tank-mine platoon were at each of these locations.

It was early in the morning, three o'clock, when this second German group tried to break through. Fortunately, two German vehicles struck American mines and the 60th men opened up with machine guns on enemy infantry which was attempting to infiltrate through their lines . . . local bridges over the Seye were blown to stop any further attempts.

Two hours later the German 77th Division's artillery tried to gain entrance to the south. The roadblock crews went into action once more and the column fled in "wild disorder." Several officers of the 77th staff were captured, and their commanding general barely got away . . . only to be killed soon afterward.

While the three counterattacks were directed against the 60th Infantry zone, the 1st Battalion of the 39th which had been attached to the 60th caught the worst jolt. This battalion had received an inkling of the impending attack while in reserve. Several German M.P.'s had been captured on June 17th, and in the course of interrogation suggested that a counterattack might be attempted through their vicinity.

General Eddy had ordered all possible river crossings blocked—and in another of those mix-ups of war, one was not. Germans pushed forward, infiltrated over the Seye in strength and launched a surprise attack at 4:30 A.M. A few preparations had been made to take care of a contingency . . . although not on such a large scale, for it was an enemy regiment which struck at this lone battalion.

The American infantry and artillery were 1,000 yards out of St. Jacques-de-Nehou, astride the road leading west; however, the nearby 60th Field was not in a position to fire immediately. The enemy's surprise onset proved the excellence of the defending force, which reacted with "valor and cool-headedness" and efficiency in its hour of stress. With little hesitation the 60th Field began displacing to new positions 1,000 yards more to the west, while groups of artillerymen engaged and delayed the enemy with small-arms fire, covering the batteries as they moved out. Then the 60th Field went into action, giving devastating support at short ranges through the use of previously obtained map data.

By this time enemy infantry and tanks were pouring through the small bridgehead over the Seye to smash at the 1st Battalion. The *Falcons* organized quickly and threw back the Germans, using rockets against the huge enemy tanks to stem a two-pronged drive.

Behind delaying action the 1st Battalion moved back to better positions, so that communications could be re-established. A hurried call enabled the battalion to receive support from Divarty, which showered the attacking regiment of the German 77th Division with withering fire This concentration immediately was followed with a counterattack, which

Distinguished Unit Citation

The *1st Battalion, 39th Infantry,* is cited for extraordinary heroism in action on the morning of 18 June 1944 near St. Jacques de Nehou, France. The battalion fought off and later crushed the 1049th Infantry Regiment and other elements of the German 77th Division attempting to break out of the Cotentin Peninsula. The battalion was in an assembly area when the German forces launched a fierce surprise attack at about 0430 hours. When heavy firing broke out the troops were quickly alerted by the outposts and placed in position to meet the enemy threat. Bazooka teams went into action and stopped two tank thrusts despite heavy casualties suffered by the teams. The troops heroically held off two numerically superior and fanatic enemy attempts to surround the battalion's positions by flanking movements; then the battalion commander ordered his men into a new position astride the St. Colombe-St. Jacques de Nehou road. Despite the intense fire and proximity of the enemy the battalion moved into the new position in an orderly manner, fighting doggedly and courageously over every inch of the new ground. During this move communications were out, isolating the battalion from supporting units. Braving the intense enemy artillery, mortar, and machine-gun fire, the wire section reestablished wire communication with division headquarters. After communications were regained an artillery concentration was requested to precede a counterattack. With the artillery and all the mortars and heavy weapons of the battalion laying a devastating barrage, the troops eagerly jumped off in the attack, closely following the artillery barrage. The attack gained momentum as the troops aggressively and valiantly fought their way forward, driving the enemy from the high ground and across the Seye River where they were strafed by Allied aircraft. This crushing defeat of a German regiment and supporting elements of the 77th Division insured the successful capture by the 9th Infantry Division the following day of the objective at St. Christophe du Foc, 14 kilometers north of Bricquebec, and completely destroyed the striking power of this German division in the Cherbourg Peninsula. This action was the final effort of the 77th Division to break out of the Cherbourg pocket. The relentless drive of the battalion resulted in the death of Major General Stegmann, commanding general of the 77th Division and over 300 of his men, as compared to 36 casualties suffered by the battalion. This decisive and costly defeat of the enemy was a tribute to the exceptional gallantry, aggressiveness, and determination of each member of the *1st Battalion, 39th Infantry,* and exemplifies the highest ideals of military service.

was launched by the 1st Battalion against the rapidly expanding enemy foothold.

Fiercely the *AAA-O* men pounded ahead, slashing away until they had regained *all* ground lost previously. The Nazis were routed, leaving many dead and wounded on the battlefield. The 1st had held, the pocket was closed and the cornered defenders of Cherbourg were sealed in their trap, as the battle northward began.

* * * *

BY THE dint of hard fighting and spectacular tenacity, the Division was becoming well known on both sides of the Atlantic. Although there were other divisions which had equally strange and newsworthy items of interest to write about, most of the correspondents seemed to like the company they found in the Ninth Division; and people like Ernie Pyle, Charles Wertenbaker, Tom Henry, Robert Capa and Harold Denny always were welcome up front.

Veteran outfits usually are full of characters and legends. The Ninth had its share of these and more. Moreover, as a famous *team* the fifteen thousand men of the Ninth definitely were news:

. . . The famed Ninth Division, which cut across the Cherbourg isthmus and choked that city, fought this isolated bitter engagement. The Nazis had cleverly defended orchards, wooded hills, and particularly hedges along the roads . . . . The Germans tried hard to fight their way out of the Cherbourg entrapment, but 25,000 or more remnants of three divisions were finally bottled . . . . While others may claim credit for having pushed the isthmus cutting drive halfway across, it was the Ninth alone which finished the task.

—Paul Mallon (King Features Syndicate)

American troops, headed by the 9th Division blasted a seven-mile-wide path across the neck of the Cherbourg peninsula Sunday, putting a stranglehold on 25,000 to 30,000 Germans in and around the prized port of Cherbourg and then slashed the Nazi 77th Division to pieces in a bloody massacre when the enemy frantically tried to break out . . . A terrific punch by the veteran 9th Division—rolling 12½ miles in two days for the invasion's fastest gain—drove clear across the peninsula and secured the seacoast between Cape Carteret, 18 miles southwest of Cherbourg and St. Lo-D'Ourville.

—The Associated Press

The first decisive victory of the Allied invasion of Normandy came yesterday when Supreme Headquarters announced that General Omar Bradley's famous and tough 9th Division had smashed its way across the neck of the Cherbourg peninsula and had massacred the German 77th Division that tried to break out of the steel trap.

—Raleigh (N.C.) NEWS AND OBSERVER

The hedgerow-to-hedgerow fighting of the 9th Division across the Cherbourg Peninsula from sea to sea must rate as one of the most brilliant military successes of United States history. For four days I accompanied these veterans, who, not only had turned the tide in Tunisia with the capture of Bizerte, but also helped wind up the Sicilian campaign with the seizure of Randazzo. They were brought to France to chop the tip off the strategic peninsula and isolate the Germans in Cherbourg . . . . The renowned heroes of Port Lyautey and Bizerte, pushed along the flank to Barneville, encountered severe resistance at the little town of St. Jacques de Nehou. They bore the brunt of an enemy counter-attack which was dispersed by the artillery 'serenade' . . . . Accomplishments to date have put the 9th Division in the forefront of United States forces in the European and African theaters . . . .

—Thomas R. Henry (Washington (D.C.) STAR)

If honors can properly be distributed by an unofficial observer this early in the game, we would like to distribute them . . . . To the now magnificent 9th Division which, after its first upset, way back at El Guettar in Tunisia, did an excellent job in the final assault against Bizerte, did a good job in Sicily where it broke the backbone of enemy resistance at Troina, and on this occasion has been as good as possible. The infantry from the 9th Division rates a mass Congressional Medal; it has been splendid throughout its quick advance to the Germans life-line on the western edge of the Cherbourg peninsula, directly responsible for one of our biggest victories of this war.

—William H. Stoneman (Chicago DAILY NEWS)

But fighting men of the Ninth Division had little opportunity to think about great achievements. It was a survival of the fittest, and the desire to live and to win was there inside them—without thinking. Most of these glassy-eyed individuals had not changed their smelly clothing since *D-Day,* and they were tired of pushing on continuously. They were sick of *C* Rations and didn't like the Army's impregnated uniforms. The nights were cold and the days were stuffy. They may have been in the world spotlight, but they felt totally out of place.

* * * *

EARLY on the morning of the 19th the Ninth, 4th and 79th Divisions attacked toward Cherbourg. Without letup the Ninth followed closely at the heels of the withdrawing enemy, who waged stiff delaying warfare. This advance was facilitated greatly by the possession of a series of maps containing accurate overprints of enemy positions, which had been discovered by American intelligence and seen by aerial reconnaissance units.

The *Falcons* pushed ahead rapidly taking all objectives including Bricquebec, and ended the day with their 1st Battalion on Hill 130, their 2nd on Hill 104 and their 3rd at St. Christophe-du-Foc—which placed the regiment very close to Cherbourg's suburb of Octeville. The 60th met little resistance on the left flank, for the enemy was retreating toward better fortifications in the Fortress Cherbourg area. As darkness fell the *Go-Devils* stopped, having passed through St. Germain-de-Gailard on their way to the Cap de la Hague Peninsula. The Ninth had chalked-up a ten mile gain for the day!

Later that evening General Collins gave the Ninth's commander approval to move north to capture the high ground between Flottemanville-Hague

AERIAL VIEW OF CHERBOURG

COLONEL JOHNSTON WAS HIT

and Octeville, and to block the main route into the Cap Hague Peninsula.

The enemy had in opposition to the Ninth a hodgepodge of troops including remnants of the 77th Division, soldiers of the 243rd and 709th Divisions and coast defense troops. Hitler had ordered them to fight unto death and many did. More, however, fought like the devil until the Americans were almost upon them and then gave up. They formed the Cherbourg Defense Force . . . under General Von Schlieben.

The Ninth's plan to envelop the western half of Cherbourg went into operation at eight o'clock on the morning of the 20th. On the left the ever-reliable 60th Infantry pushed out with its 2nd and 3rd Battalions abreast. Vasteville was reached easily and noon found the regiment to the left of Flottemanville-Hague. It was here that the 60th received new objectives: Henneville and the high ground and the road junction (Crossroads 167) on the Beaumont-Hague road—which ran through Flottemanville-Hague. Henneville is near the northern coast and west of Cherbourg, and capture of that town meant cutting off the enemy both in Cherbourg and on the Hague Peninsula.

The terrain had changed now; it was open, sparsely wooded country, with hills, hills, hills and a few valleys shaped by precipitous walls—familiar terrain for the Ninth. Points of entry to Cherbourg were blocked by fortifications, S.P. (self-propelled) guns, ditches and mines . . . as well as every available rifle and *Flak* gun.

The fortified area around Flottemanville-Hague proved one of the most difficult regions of the peninsula to penetrate. For a time the 60th was unable to make sufficient headway, and that regiment had much in common with the remainder of the Ninth. The 47th had pushed through the 60th near Vasteville and attacked northeast on Hill 171 (Mont du Roc), supported by fire from the 39th Infantry. Their mission was to capture the high ground east of strategic Henneville. As the *Raiders* pushed on, the *Falcons* were to launch an attack of their own against Flottemanville-Hague's strong defenses—to the north and rear of the 47th. However, enemy resistance was determined; particularly before Hill 171, where 88's, 20mm AA *(Flak)* guns, dug-in machine guns, mortars and artillery were combined with the usual enemy ferocity to delay any large gains. The *Flak* guns had been lowered and were being used as anti-personnel weapons—inflicting a very painful type of wound. By midnight the outer perimeter of Cherbourg's main defenses was reached and opposition stiffened.

Throughout the day bravery and sacrifice had been needed to subjugate the enemy. Many casualties had resulted in this drive; among them was one of the most popular men in the 47th Infantry Regiment, the 2nd Battalion C.O., Lt. Colonel James D. Johnston who was wounded mortally at the blood-stained Crossroads 114 near Acqueville by an *eighty-eight* shell, along with other members of his staff.

There was another leader who fought his last fight before the defenses of Flottemanville-Hague at this time. He was Second Lieutenant John E.

Butts. Probably the most courageous example of self-sacrifice during the invasion of Normandy was made by this lieutenant. His posthumously awarded *Congressional Medal of Honor* is but a part of the story of a loyalty which endured unto death.

As a platoon leader in the 60th Infantry, Lt. Butts was wounded painfully on June 14, 1944. The bridgehead was in need of every combat leader, and in order to continue aiding expansion of the American toehold he refused treatment. Sharp fighting ensued as Butts led his platoon over the Douve River. On the 16th he was wounded again, but continued fighting—refusing all aid.

Seeming to have a cast-iron constitution, he carried on. When his company reached the vicinity of Flottemanville-Hague *one week later* Lt. Butts was still on his feet leading his men! Twice wounded—still going—he noticed his platoon fall back before an extremely well-fortified hill, where the Germans were reinforced by anti-tank guns, machine guns, pillboxes, artillery and mortars.

A burst of machine-gun fire swept him down. Writhing in pain, he rose up and rallied his men . . . sent a squad on a flanking maneuver. He now was wounded severely in the stomach and dying. Determined to bring all fires upon himself, so that the attention would be focused away from the flanking squad, Lt. Butts held his stomach together with one hand and made a lone frontal assault.

The Germans were waiting for him—and another burst hit his bullet-ridden body. With superhuman strength he dragged himself forward . . . as all eyes of the enemy centered upon the lone figure attacking them. Lt. Butts came to within 10 yards of the enemy lines, then a direct burst of machine-gun fire cut him down.

The gallant lieutenant rose no more, but his actions had taken the spotlight so completely that his platoon was able to maneuver around the unsuspecting Germans and to destroy the fortifications.

Such were the men of the Ninth . . . such are the men of America . . . such was Second Lieutenant *John E. Butts* of Company *E.*

★ ★ ★

BY JUNE 21st the Ninth had outdistanced everyone and had to rely upon the 4th Cavalry Group for flank protection. Some pockets of resistance had been by-passed enroute; others demanded immediate action. Hill 171 and Flottemanville-Hague were foremost of the latter, and they were of such importance as to make the Division readjust positions during the day. The slightly repetitious situation was that the enemy held the dominant heights before Cherbourg.

But the Allies had air superiority in Europe, and the AAF flew a mission for the Ninth, hitting antiaircraft positions on the nose of Mont du Roc (southwest of Octeville). Further infantry reinforcements came on line, too, when the 39th C.T. moved up to strengthen the *Raider* right flank and give depth to the Cherbourg attack.

Air support hit the enemy hard on June 22nd. Taking Cherbourg would have been much harder without it. During the massive bombardment, however, Divarty's white phosphorous and yellow smoke markings were moved back by the wind and the 47th and 60th Combat Teams were bombed and strafed by Allied planes, causing many casualties. Fortunately, the leading elements managed to weather the tragic error of the winds and launch a follow-up attack.

The 47th jumped off from Crossroads 114 on Sideville following the cessation of a 2 P.M. aerial strike. Stubborn opposition greeted the *Raiders,* for the enemy had possession of the high ground and strongpoints. It was necessary to reduce these prepared positions one-by-one; and the day's battles followed a pattern: meeting strongpoint, reducing by artillery and tank-destroyer fire, assault and then on to the next emplacement. Boguenville was captured in this manner. It was here that General Stroh showed his mettle; he was all over the area, directing fire and spreading encouragement.

Over to the left the enemy had excellent observation on the 60th Infantry and his artillery was having a field day. Furthermore, the road southeast out of St. Croix-Hague and the area northeast of Acqueville were honeycombed with German holdouts—who waged a tenacious delaying battle. Despite two enemy counterattacks and the obstacles of terrain and shelling, the regiment advanced as planned.

Equally good news for the Ninth was the capture of Hill 171.

While this battle was going on, Corps headquarters was awaiting eagerly the answer to an ultimatum which it had sent Major General von Schlieben via radio . . . to give up his hopeless position by 9 A.M. of the 22nd. Von Schlieben did not answer and the Corps piled ahead.

With all three regiments on line the Ninth Division drew ever tighter the noose it was fashioning around western Cherbourg. The 39th cleaned up two strongpoints bounding the road near Boguenville, these having been by-passed by the 47th's 2nd Battalion on the previous day. Then the 1st Battalion of the 39th attacked Hill 131, overrunning the bunkers and forcing the Germans to withdraw; while the 2nd Battalion assaulted Hills 138 and 150, capturing many emplacements and their occupants. The entire movement of the 39th was termed a "battle behind a battle", since the combat team was engaged in cleaning out pockets of resistance which had been skipped by the advancing 47th and 60th.

Distinguished Unit Citation

The *2d Platoon, Company C, 899th Tank Destroyer Battalion,* is cited for extraordinary gallantry in action comprising a series of occasions on which they destroyed enemy guns blocking the advance of the 2d Battalion, 47th Infantry, to Cherbourg and Greville. When the 2d Battalion was under artillery fire at crossroad Le Motel, 22 June 1944, smoke was placed on a 77-mm gun firing directly down the road at 300 yards range, and a tank destroyer moving into the road quickly put the enemy gun out of action. The following day at Hoe de Tot a well-concealed 88-mm gun firing on the battalion was silenced when a tank destroyer moved around a blind corner, took position at 150 yards range, and, after the enemy gun had fired once and wrecked the tank destroyer's track, ended the duel with fire that destroyed the gun and made casualties of its crew. During street fighting in Cherbourg on 25 June the *2d Platoon* helped put five 20-mm guns and one 47-mm gun out of action. On two occasions the only tactics available again required a tank destroyer to sweep suddenly around a corner, firing while moving, in full exposure to the enemy gun, which in each instance was hit before it could respond with accurate fire. On 1 July a 77-mm enemy gun was prevented from delaying the 2d Battalion's advance on the Greville fortifications longer than was required by a *2d Platoon* tank destroyer to approach a stone wall protecting the gun and demolish the position. In Greville itself another crew subjected themselves to heavy mortar fire to reduce three strongpoints, and after damage from a mine had halted their tank destroyer in an exposed position, remained at the gun and continued to fire throughout ensuing action. In all these engagements the crews of the *2d Platoon,* by their unhesitating subordination of personal safety to swift accomplishment of successive dangerous missions, won the admiration of all those to whom they set their inspiring example of gallantry.

An advance had begun at 7 A.M. in the *Raider* zone which carried the regiment much nearer its final goal. While well-directed artillery, mortar and small-arms fire from the outer ring blocked the path of the 1st Battalion, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions were able to push forward and capture the heights which overlooked Cherbourg from the west. This successful sweep broke the main perimeter defense of Cherbourg and netted several hundred prisoners and a great deal of supplies.

The flank-protecting *Go-Devils* improved their positions while awaiting an aerial carpet to clear a pathway north, then smashed out once again. Midnight found the regiment well past its objective line; and thus were cleared the final Flottemanville-Hague defenses.

* * * *

HARD fighting developed on the 24th, as the Division advanced on the city of Cherbourg down a ridge which paralleled the Divette River. *Falcons* and *Raiders* attacked the city's defenses while the 60th remained in place—prepared to push north and block the Germans from reinforcing or escaping from Cherbourg.

In the north and west the enemy was showing the *Go-Devils* that he had no intention of giving up, and it was the same up and down the line. About 1,300 yards from the 39th positions and southwest of Octeville there was a strong German emplaced position consisting of anti-aircraft guns and other weapons. This was Hill 128, a portion of the ridge which had been smashed in two separate aerial bombardments . . . still sheltering the foe. *Falcons* put an end to this nuisance at nine o'clock that night. And after the 2nd Battalion captured Hill 128, the

3rd pushed on to Octeville and the outskirts of Cherbourg. (The 1st Battalion was in Division reserve, protecting the Ninth's right, since the 79th Division had not yet come abreast of the Ninth, and the Ninth Division was spearheading beyond safety limits.)

The 47th had fought hard all day inside the fortified zone, and was breaking through slowly. Its 1st and 2nd Battalions already had begun to flush out road junctions and strongpoints west of the city, accounting for the capture of many prisoners and enemy vehicles. Greatest opposition was encountered by the 3rd Battalion, which ended the day several hundred yards short of its mission; although all battalions were well toward Cherbourg.

Just prior to midnight of June 24th, Field Order No. 9 was issued by the Division and contained this prophetic statement . . . "This Division . . . will attack on 25 June and capture CHERBOURG."

Gales had hindered the landing of adequate men and materiel upon the beaches to the southeast. Capture of the great port of Cherbourg was the lone answer and solution to the Allies' need of the moment. For several days the Ninth had been driving hard on the city and the necessity of an all-weather harbor had been the reason. Without a permanent and protected port of entry, the invasion stood a good chance of bogging down. Thus the mission of the Ninth was the current mission of the entire American drive as well.

* * * *

In this day's operation, the 47th Infantry broke into the western side of the city. After having cut the COTENTIN Peninsula and having driven rapidly north against strongly defended field fortifications, units of the Division were the first Allied troops to enter the fortress CHERBOURG. The right flank of the Division was still partially exposed, as the 79th Division front lines were not yet abreast of the 47th Infantry.

—Ninth Division Report of Operations

It was June 25, the nineteenth day of the Battle of Liberation. And the veterans of the American Ninth Infantry Division . . . now were conducting the first smashing Allied victory of the invasion. For by nightfall, the great port of Cherbourg was for all practical purposes in American hands . . . The swiftest advance of the Normandy campaign had enabled Lt. Gen. Omar M. Bradley's Ninth to bottle up the enemy in Cherbourg.

—NEWSWEEK

HISTORY was made by the 47th Infantry on June 25, 1944, when its 2nd Battalion under Major (Lt. Colonel) Woodrow W. Bailey entered Cherbourg at 12:55 P.M. It was just after a most successful aerial bombardment that the battalion began entering the city from Equeurdreville Fort. Both the attached engineers and Company *E* could lay claim to having set first foot inside the city itself.

Distinguished Unit Citation

The *2d Battalion, 47th Infantry,* is cited for extraordinary gallantry and outstanding performance of duty from 21 June to 26 June 1944, during which time it assaulted and captured four heavily fortified enemy-held positions and penetrated the heart of Cherbourg, having advanced more than 10 kilometers from Crosville. Advancing toward Coudet on 21 June, the battalion came under heavy and murderous barrages of artillery, mortar, and flat-trajectory fire which injured or killed the battalion commander, a company commander, and other key leaders. Reorganizing and rallying on the following day, they pushed forward in the face of heavy fire and overran the strongpoint, capturing 120 prisoners, 25 machine guns, and 5 antiaircraft guns. Continuing their drive forward on 23 June they assaulted one of the strongest of the fortified German positions in the defensive belt around Cherbourg. The enemy was entrenched strongly in concrete pill boxes and deeply revetted trenches on commanding ground. Three assaults were necessary in order to reach this vital objective, it finally being taken by violent hand-to-hand fighting within the German positions. Then, outflanking the enemy by a clever ruse at Equeurdieville (sic), the position was assaulted and the enemy routed with rifle fire and bayonets. After enemy Nebelwerfers had been silenced, patrols infiltrated within the Cherbourg arsenal, fought off savage resistance, and held out until reinforcements were able to reach them. Shortly after daylight, the arsenal garrison surrendered. Within 5 days, the *2d Battalion, 47th Infantry* captured four heavily fortified positions, 2,600 prisoners, 25 antiaircraft guns, and hundreds of automatic weapons and small arms. Without ever having flank protection from units on its left and suffering 113 casualties from the almost constant heavy barrages rained upon it, the *2d Battalion, 47th Infantry,* crossed more than 10 kilometers of heavily fortified and difficult terrain and engaged the enemy with a magnificent display of courage and devotion to duty.

However, the accepted version is that Pfc. John T. Sarao of Company *E* started racing his platoon leader, to see who would be first into Cherbourg—and Sarao won.

The key to Cherbourg was the well-defended, ancient fortress of Equeurdreville. Major Bailey prescribed a frontal assault, which followed a rolling mortar concentration. This strategy forced the Germans to stay buttoned-up, while the battalion overwhelmed the supposedly impenetrable defenses. It was not an easy victory, and only after hard fighting and many German casualties was the fort reduced.

Following the fall of Equeurdreville, Companies *E* and *F* pressed forward, to become the first Allied troops to begin liberation of the city of Cherbourg. They battled into the city and besieged the naval arsenal. Whereas the 2nd Battalion was able to clear this area partly, the arsenal held out; for it was an enemy strongpoint, composed of fortified subterranean passages, the walls of which were exceedingly thick.

The Ninth Division had the western (larger) half of the city as its objective and it required quick and intelligent action to reduce this strong sector. Major Bailey sent a platoon of Company *F* down to the beach along the harbor, and began the envelopment of the city.

Extremely stiff resistance had hindered the 2nd in its drives on the city. Nevertheless, seven *Nebelwerfers* were destroyed by its mortars; many prisoners were captured, and its attachment of 15th Engineers performed with their usual skill and courage in clearing passage through three mine fields. Moreover, the fatal wounding of the battalion's well-liked Colonel Johnston was being revenged.

As for the other battalions of the 47th, they too had pushed forward and had met determined German forces. The 3rd (with Company *B* attached) began the morning attack abreast of the 2nd; however, it met a hail of fire from a well-fortified location half-way between Octeville and Equeurdreville. Artillery pounded the fort, but by nightfall the 3rd Battalion still was battling to reduce it. The 1st, meanwhile, had advanced between the 2nd and 3rd Battalions and was stopped at this same strongpoint.

Far to the left the 60th was protecting the flank with roadblocks and patrols. On the right *Paddy* Flint's 39th Infantry was battling inside Octeville against *Flak* guns, artillery, small arms and snipers. Street fighting had developed into a wicked engagement, in which the *Falcon's* 899th Tank Destroyer attachment knocked out two 88's with direct fire.

In recounting June 25th the Division could reckon a highly successful day. Over 1,000 of the enemy had been captured and several strongpoints had been

CHERBOURG WAS ENTERED AT 12:55 P.M.

wrested from the Germans. Dramatic incidents had happened as well.

A young German medical lieutenant, the adjutant at the Naval Hospital of Cherbourg, had made his way through the 39th Infantry lines, accompanied by a captured American flyer. The German officer's plea was that the hospital be spared shelling, and that plasma be given to take care of 150 wounded Americans within the building. Both wishes were granted, although it had seemed mighty strange that an enemy ammunition dump had been placed so near to Red Cross hospital markings!

Captain (Lt. Col.) John B. Jackson, assistant Division G-2 who had acted as both host and interpreter for the medic, accompanied them back. The captain carried a surrender ultimatum to the enemy within the city . . . which was accepted without reply.

Just outside the harbor, four cruisers and three battleships of the American fleet were waiting to aid in the capture of the city. Naval shore fire control parties had arrived at Divarty headquarters on the preceding day. But most of the vessels used their weapons solely for the purpose of returning fire with coastal guns and shore batteries during the 25th. Seaborne planes zoomed overhead to adjust fire, yet the Navy was unable to inflict much damage on the enemy's positions. The Navy's presence, however, enabled the Ninth to locate these batteries and they were knocked out by Divarty's guns.

* * * *

JUNE 26th was a Monday, one of those days which seem like every other one to those who lose track of time. The western half of Cherbourg was taking a terrific pounding from the 47th Infantry, for here were the best defenses and the most snipers. Street-fighting against machine-gun nests, rooftop strongpoints and individual snipers kept the combat team busy. It was like cleaning out a village of madmen. Except for the arsenal, all organized opposition was crushed by dark and the fate of Cherbourg depended upon how long this last defensive position could hold out.

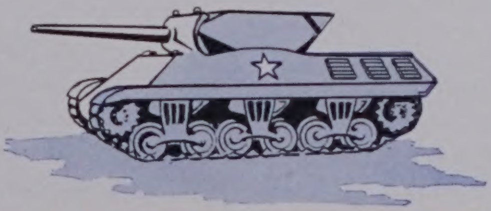
The 39th Infantry had been very busy, too. With the Division commander accompanying its leading battalions, the regiment captured the naval subteranean fortifications at St. Sauveur, approximately in the center of the rim of fortifications and about one mile from Octeville. General von Schlieben, Cherbourg Defense Area Commander, Admiral Hennecke, highest naval commander present and their staffs succumbed to the arms of the Ninth after first refusing to surrender. The Americans decided to make things hot for the Germans, and excerpts from General Eddy's diary describe events which followed:

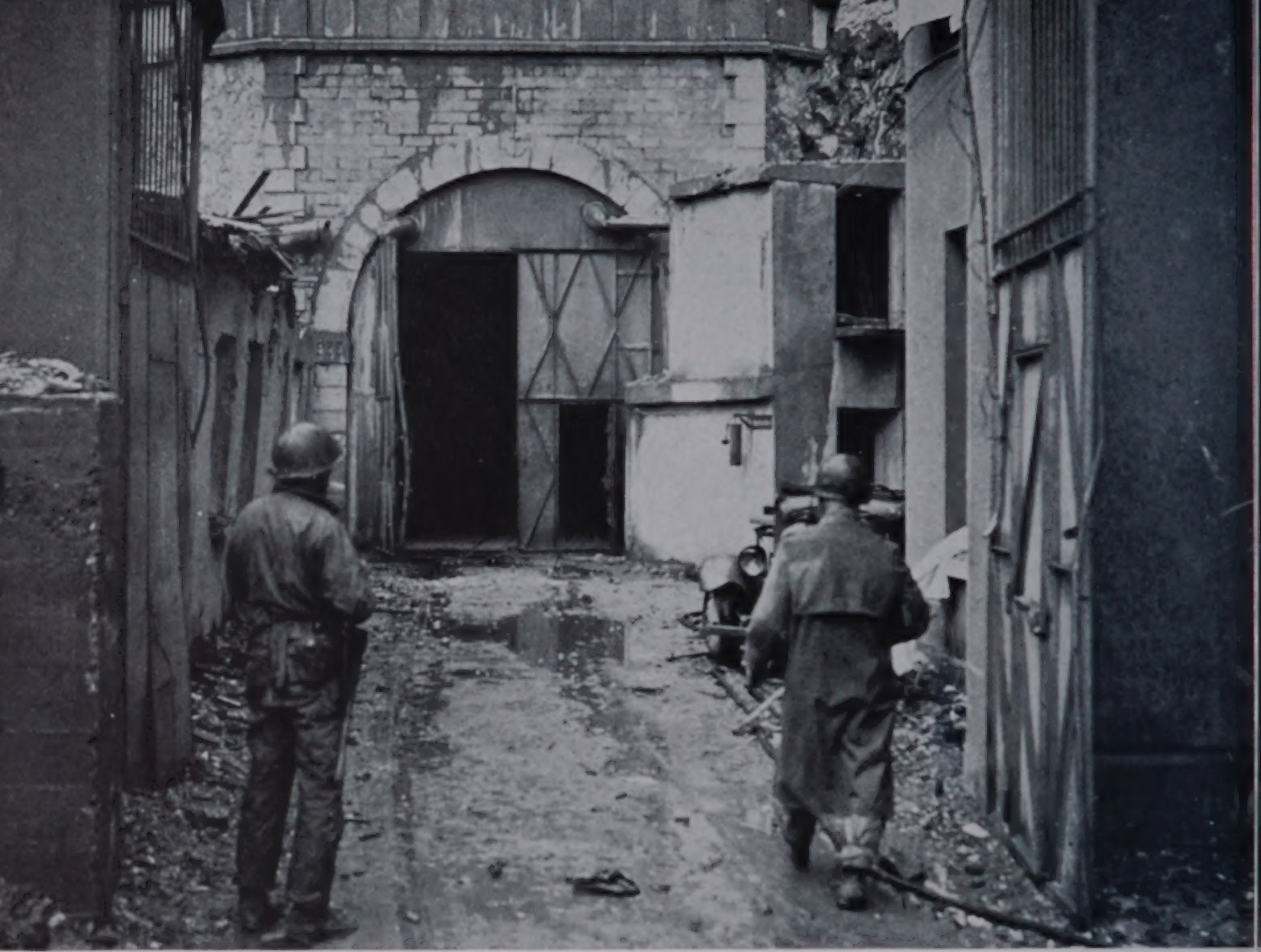
"The fortress had some six entrances . . . which were as much as several hundred yards apart, were covered with machine guns. Our people had succeeded in driving the Germans well into these entrances so that their fire could be directed only straight ahead . . . .

"The battalion commander had succeeded in working forward a large tank-destroyer . . . . After a half dozen shots from the TD's three inch gun into the rear entrances, which apparently played great havoc, a loud voice called out in German from the front entrance to cease fire. After much difficulty we were able to get all the battalion quiet.

"I then directed a soldier who could speak German to call and tell them that we would give them two minutes to come out. Instantly, a German with one of the largest white flags I have ever seen ran out . . . followed by a young typical German lieutenant who, I swear, all but goose-stepped . . . the lieutenant asked to see the ranking officer present. I happened to be present and he was directed to me. He informed me that the Commanding General of the 709th Infantry Division was in the cave and wished to surrender. He requested that I send a staff officer down with him to escort the General to me.

"In the meantime, the tank-destroyer's projectiles had caused so much dust and fumes in the tunnel that the German soldiers, once finding that the white flag had been raised, began to pour out. By actual count later, there were 842 of them. These Germans were in such a rush that they denied the General his





ENTRANCE TO SUBTERRANEAN FORT

wish for a more formal surrender. As he was standing near the entrance, the avalanche of soldiers carried him and his party with it.

"When the General came up out of the pit to me and told me that he was von Schlieben, I damn near dropped dead. When he introduced me to Admiral Hennecke, I thought I was dead . . ."

Von Schlieben, the Nazi warlord who had exacted a no-surrender pledge from his men gave up—but he informed the Ninth's commander that because of communications, he could not (and would not) surrender any other place in the Fortress Cherbourg area. General Eddy led both these high commanders back to his C.P. and called in the press for interviews. Hennecke was quite talkative; however, the German general presented a haughty and austere appearance. He had been glad to save his hide in the fortress, but now had gained composure and pretended that he was perturbed by interrogation.

Robert Capa, the famous *LIFE* magazine photographer was preparing to photograph the Nazi leader, when Von Schlieben yawned that he was tired of being photographed. Capa who had lived in Austria and fled the annexation of that country by Hitler, replied with a choice remark in German, "And *I* am tired of photographing captured German generals!"

Von Schlieben's headquarters had not suffered from rationing. It contained huge stores of small arms, ammunition, signal equipment and foodstuffs. Those men who were able to go below into the elaborate underground establishment found a soldier's *Shangri-La*.

Most of the 39th turned toward Cherbourg and cleared the city right up to the harbor. At the fortified city hall Lt. Colonel Frank Gunn, commanding the *Falcon* 2nd Battalion, accepted surrender of 400 Germans and their colonel, which practically ended all resistance to the 39th within Cherbourg.

* * * *

A British officer, speaking in German from London over the facilities of the British broadcasting corporation told the Cherbourg defenders Tuesday that they had been trapped by the United States Ninth Infantry Division and he reminded the enemy that this same outfit had shaped the great Nazi defeat on Cape Bon in Tunisia 13 months ago . . . . "Units of the Ninth American Infantry division are close on your heels . . . Little more than a year ago, other German soldiers, commanded by General von Arnim, were driven into the sea by the same American Ninth Infantry division. The soldiers of Arnim's army, who then realized that it is not dishonorable to surrender when one is defeated and can no longer resist, gave up the fight, and they have not regretted their decision."

—The Associated Press

ONLY the naval arsenal remained to the enemy in Cherbourg on June 27th, and the *Raiders* were about to assault and reduce that fortification. Once more the ever-present Division commander was up with the leading battalions and watching the proceedings. He issued an ultimatum just prior to the attack and General Sattler, the enemy commander,

CAPTURED ENEMY CAME WELL SUPPLIED

put out the white flag for himself, staff and 400 men at 9:30 A.M.

With unnecessary casualties in mind, General Eddy refused to accept the white flag gesture until General Sattler informed the Americans as to the whereabouts of mines, booby traps and so on within the arsenal. The Nazi withheld this information, and the Ninth's commander threatened to turn tank destroyer guns on the Germans. At this moment the German officer *relented,* and gave his word of "honor as a German officer," that there were no such devices in the subterranean fort. This proved to be correct information.

The naval arsenal had immense stores of mines, explosives, small-arms ammunition, 240mm shells, paint, food-stuffs (first fresh meat for men of the Ninth since *D-Day*), many thousands of rifles, and the hospitals in and around the city had great stores of medical supplies and equipment. With this capture, all of Cherbourg had surrendered and resistance ceased within the city. The Division took over two German hospitals; this included their medical staffs and 2,600 patients, among which were the 150 American wounded.

Distinguished Unit Citation

The *3d Battalion, 47th Infantry,* is cited for extraordinary heroism and outstanding performance of duty in action in the swiftness of its advance and the heavy opposition overcome in terrain-favoring defense during its drives on Cherbourg and the Hague Peninsula. At 1400, 22 June 1944, the battalion attacked from high ground 7 miles southwest of Cherbourg and by the following day had taken a hill 1,000 yards northwest of Bois du Mont du Roc, overrunning en route five entrenched and wire-protected strong points armed heavily with artillery, machine guns, and rifles. Throughout hours of darkness, the battalion, then 1 mile forward of units operating in adjacent territory, repulsed the counterattacks which cost the enemy 63 dead and the next morning continued the attack toward Cherbourg, reaching its outskirts over four enemy strong points and capturing many prisoners and much materiel. On 26 June, an attack was launched from Rue de la Polle on Cherbourg's perimeter and the troops advanced from house to house under continuous, heavy enemy fire. Having moved to an assembly area near Nicolle on 29 June, the *3d Battalion* advanced again and took fortifications of thick concrete, wire, and anti-personnel mines southeast of Gruchy; then repeated this success against the strong point to the northwest on the following day and thus ended the 2-day action on the Hague Peninsula. In this swift, unbroken series of successes against strong points over a 9-day period, while the *3d Battalion,* 47th Infantry, lost 28 killed and 145 wounded, they killed 314 and captured 2,161 of the enemy and added a glorious page to the history of American fighting men.

As yet the U. S. Navy could not come into the harbor because of an isolated fortification, which, manned by a few German rear guard troops was still firing. American artillery and an infantry company soon silenced this battery, and now the only fire was from long range coastal guns of high velocity, which were situated on the Cap de la Hague Peninsula.

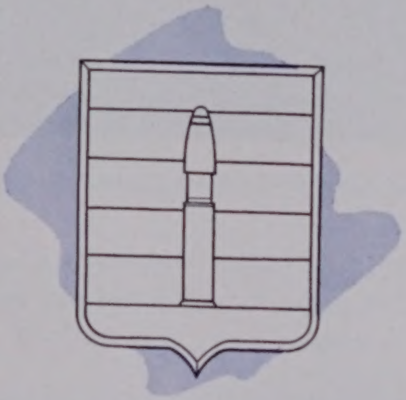
Missions accomplished, the 39th and 47th Infantries were relieved by the 4th Infantry Division, and the regiments moved back to the area of Traisnellerie. But the fighting was not over for the Ninth on the peninsula. American airpower, called by the Ninth's air-support officer, plastered the enemy's guns and ammunition dumps west of Cherbourg—including those at Joburg. At the same time the 60th Infantry captured St. Croix and the Ninth Division was on its way to fight another battle, as the Nazis moved back to defend the Hague peninsula.

* * * *

CAPTURE of Cherbourg called for a celebration and there was a ceremony held at the Cherbourg *Hotel de Ville* (city hall). Liberation of the first large city of France was feted by both the local populace and the divisions of General Collins' VII Corps. As was so often the case, the Ninth was to spend little time in the city since there remained a battle to be fought. While the remainder of the First Army turned its attention southward the Ninth Infantry Division was left alone, to clean out the last enemy forces in the Cap de la Hague Peninsula.

Reports of June 28th had placed the enemy strength on the peninsula at 3,000 remnants; later actions proved that there were over twice this number. These enemy holdouts were equipped with long range artillery and had excellent local defenses. It was believed that the main opposition would come from the Vauville-Cruchy line, and the Ninth regrouped toward this line for the cleaning-out process. The attack to the northwest was to begin on the 29th, aided by close support from the air.

Doughboys from the 47th and 60th Infantries launched the first assaults, with the *Raiders* working through the ridge territory on the right flank. Colonel Smythe planned to leap-frog his battalions over successive ridges, and on the 28th had his 1st Battalion in Querqueville and his 2nd at the airport. The entire peninsula soon was under artillery concentrations and bombardment from the air. On the 29th the Ninth pushed forward against a multitude of well-defended emplacements and under heavy enemy barrages. Hundreds of prisoners were taken and the Ninth Divarty fired many counter-battery missions, including one to stop and break up a German counterattack of tanks.



Three air missions were flown over Beaumont Hague starting at 10 A. M. and bit-by-bit the air force and artillery reduced the defenses to such a condition that only rubble was left for German breastworks. Nonetheless, unobstructed fields of fire over the treeless and bushless terrain gave the Nazis good fields of fire.

But it was doubtful if the enemy could see far on June 30th. Bad weather conditions had halted aerial bombardment and the Ninth Division Artillery resumed its role of chief destructor. With this support the 60th moved upon heavily fortified Branville and Beaumont-Hague, the 47th set its sights upon Nicolle Ridge and the 39th prepared for battle in reserve.

The story of Beaumont-Hague was more than a simple recapitulation of captured prisoners and materiel; it was indicative of the type of smashing finish which the men of the Ninth Division were writing to the Nazi conquest. Throughout this fight the doughs of the 60th Regiment found little time for rest. Men of the 1st Battalion had their hands full around fortified Road Junction 167, and the 3rd Battalion reached an impasse after advancing 300 yards. But this slow beginning was to melt into a fast conclusion, one which could reckon the capture of over 1,000 prisoners for that day.

During the night of June 29-30, the 2nd Battalion had displaced to a position near the 1st, digging in north of the highway. The men of the 2nd were worn out; they had been on the go most of the night . . . catching only an hour or two of sleep. Company *E* had suffered terrific losses, and only two officers were left. As so often had happened in combat, the battalion no sooner began to dig in than it was ordered into the attack once again . . . with Company *E* in the lead.

Machine guns coughed out their speedy messages of death and mines hindered normal advancing as the company worked toward Hill 179. Then the weary, grizzled infantrymen charged forward with *marching fire*. There were only a few mortars to support the assault and no smoke was left to cover the front, since part of the battalion had been delayed to fill in an anti-tank ditch. Captain Sprindus (C.O.) led the charge and helped clear the way for his men by removing mines.

The 3rd Platoon by-passed the hill and went on toward Beaumont. Meanwhile, Company *F* came up on the right with tanks as the enemy began to retreat, both surprised and demoralized by these actions. Company *F* pushed into the town and assisted Company *E* to mop-up and capture the Beaumont-Hague stumbling block . . . thus breaking the strongest defenses in that sector and hastening the final defeat of the enemy on July 1st.

Greville, Gruchy and the towns beyond were falling to the 47th at this time. At 6 P.M. that regiment broke through and by midnight had taken its objectives, which included well-defended Nicolle Ridge and the heights to the northwest. Greville was captured after a fierce close-in grenade fight against 88's, mortars, artillery. The battles of Greville and Beaumont-Hague spelled *finis* for strong enemy resistance. On this day the Colonel commanding the German forces of resistance was captured by the Ninth, and one more engagement remained . . . a job for the 39th, which prepared to move out on July 1st.

KNOCKED-OUT GERMAN RAILWAY GUN

JULY 1st marked the end of the Cotentin Peninsula campaign. The *Falcon* 3rd Battalion had moved up during the night previous to launch a daring early morning attack against Auderville. Supported by Company *A* of the 899th T.D.'s, Troop *C* of the 4th Cavalry Squadron and fully motorized, the battalion passed through the 60th Infantry and into unknown country. It was dark and dangerous to the front and the terrain was strange; however, the 3rd relied upon an audacious attack to surprise the defenders of Auderville.

At midnight the group reached Road Junction 133, which was beyond Joburg, and the *Falcons* dismounted. It was a foot march now, with armored support from the vehicles of Troop *C* close by. The troopers reached the edge of Auderville before the battalion, captured several prisoners, interrogated pro-Allied civilians and obtained the location of enemy positions.

Coming in from the north at 4 A.M., the 3rd Battalion surprised the town completely and had captured it one hour later. "Everything here gave up," was the report and the battalion sent patrols to St. Germain-des-Vaux and Goury. By 10 A.M. the 3rd had captured 1,000 prisoners (3,000 that day), two 10-inch railway guns, four 155mm howitzers, four 88mm self-propelled guns, two 47mm guns and ten *Flak* guns! In addition, the victorious 3rd reported that the peninsula was cleared of the enemy "as far north as Auderville and west there to the coast."

In the afternoon the 47th Infantry informed Division headquarters that "the Germans are just sitting around waiting to be taken." Enemy opposition definitely had collapsed, and by 2:30 P.M. the Division had complete control of the Cap Hague Peninsula. At three o'clock it sent the report to Corps that its mission had been accomplished and thus all operations ceased.

With operations over on the Cotentin Peninsula the Ninth took stock; of the VII Corps total of 39,000 prisoners (*D-Day* to July 1st), the Ninth had captured 18,490—as well as copious amounts of weapons, foodstuffs and vehicles. Division losses had been 390 killed and 1,851 wounded.

Once more the press had its say about the achievements of the Ninth:

> *Gen. Bradley announced yesterday that capture of the northern end of the Cherbourg peninsula by VII Corps had been completed when the Ninth Division reached the extreme northwest point. These operations were accomplished against "very strongly fortified areas" he declared.*
>
> —*The Stars and Stripes*

If any unit has earned the right to be called Hitler's nemesis, it is the U.S. Ninth Division. Here is a group that really thrives on tough opposition. It cracked the enemy at Bizerte in that memorable North African campaign and now has led the amazing surge across Cherbourg peninsula, which has overshadowed every other invasion accomplishment. America has reason to be proud of this superb fighting unit, the first of many who are destined to write their names in flaming letters across the pages of history. If the Germans ever had any idea that our boys lacked what it takes, they certainly must be convinced now.

—Boston GLOBE (An Editorial)

One of the enemy's high ranking officers was particularly impressed by the Ninth American Division, which spearheaded the drive through St. Sauveur and then swung against Cherbourg.

From the viewpoint of this officer, the Ninth continued to hammer day and night without giving the defenders a rest. His highest tribute was that the Ninth reminded him of the best German divisions when they were battling forward in Russia.

—Don Whitehead (San Francisco EXAMINER)

The Ninth was good. In the Cherbourg campaign, it performed like a beautiful machine. Its previous battle experience paid off. Not only in individual fighting but in the perfect way the whole organization clicked . . . . The Ninth did something in that campaign that we hadn't always done in the past. It kept tenaciously on the enemy's neck. When the Germans would withdraw a little the Ninth was right on top of them.

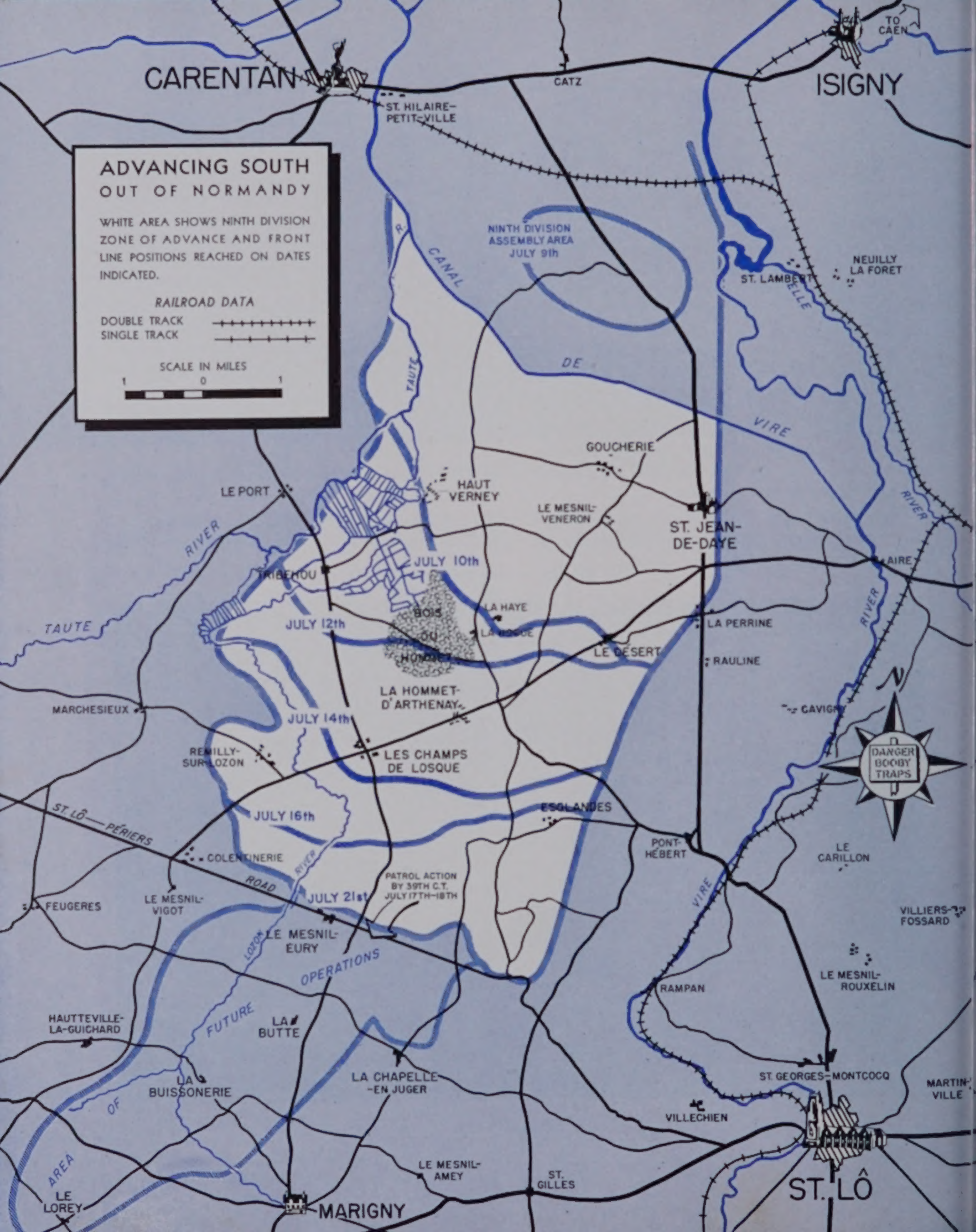
—Ernie Pyle

* * * *

WITH operations ended the Ninth rested, recuperated and stocked-up at its Les Pieux bivouac. But rest was short-lived. On Independence Day an alert was received for movement southward toward

A GLANCE AT THE RECORD

BIZERT
TROINA


ADVANCING SOUTH OUT OF NORMANDY
WHITE AREA SHOWS NINTH DIVISION ZONE OF ADVANCE AND FRONT LINE POSITIONS REACHED ON DATES INDICATED.
RAILROAD DATA
DOUBLE TRACK
SINGLE TRACK
SCALE IN MILES
1
0
1
CARENTAN
CATZ
TO CAEN
ISIGNY
ST. HILAIRE-PETIT-VILLE
R. TAUTE
CANAL DE VIRE
NINTH DIVISION ASSEMBLY AREA JULY 9th
ST. LAMBERT
NEUILLY LA FORET
ELLE
GOUCHERIE
HAUT VERNEY
LE PORT
LE MESNIL-VENERON
ST. JEAN-DE-DAYE
RIVER
TRIBEHOU
JULY 10th
AIRE
RIVER TAUTE
LA HAYE
BOIS DU HOMMET
LA LOSQUE
JULY 12th
LE DESERT
LA PERRINE
RAULINE
LA HOMMET-D'ARTHENAY
MARCHESIEUX
JULY 14th
CAVIGNY
REMILLY-SUR-LOZON
LES CHAMPS DE LOSQUE
RIVER
DANGER BOOBY TRAPS
N
ST. LÔ—PÉRIERS ROAD
JULY 16th
ESGLANDES
PONT-HEBERT
LE CARILLON
COLENTINERIE
RIVER
PATROL ACTION BY 39TH C.T. JULY 17TH-18TH
VIRE
FEUGERES
LE MESNIL-VIGOT
JULY 21st
VILLIERS-FOSSARD
LOZON
LE MESNIL-EURY
OPERATIONS
RAMPAN
LE MESNIL-ROUXELIN
HAUTTEVILLE-LA-GUICHARD
LA BUTTE
FUTURE
ST. GEORGES-MONTCOCQ
LA CHAPELLE-EN JUGER
MARTIN-VILLE
LA BUISSONERIE
OF
VILLECHIEN
AREA
LE MESNIL-AMEY
ST. GILLES
LE LOREY
MARIGNY
ST. LÔ

Carentan. The First Army was jockeying into position for a huge offensive, and once again the veteran Ninth Division would be in the forefront. Orders were issued on the 8th to motor south and stakes were pulled on the following day—as familiar thoughts returned to the minds of old-timers . . . "Here we go again!"

By four o'clock on the afternoon of July 9th the journey had ended and a new phase opened in the saga of the Ninth. Combat teams were formed and the Division immediately commenced relieving elements of the 30th Division and the 113th Cavalry Group on line. The 30th had been holding a large sector and the men of the *Octofoil* were assuming responsibility for the right half. Eventually the Ninth was to drive to the high ground south of the St. Lo-Periers Road; however, a great deal of fighting lay between.

Strengthening of the 30th Division's line had been well-timed; for the enemy realized the weakness of this extended front and even then was preparing to counterattack toward Isigny, possibly breaking through and splitting the Allied forces. He had brought up his very best troops and simply was awaiting a lull in Allied aerial activity before committing them.

At this time the British were having trouble in penetrating the Caen defenses, and the American forces were attempting to push their line south—down to Coutances, along the St. Lo-Periers Road to the pivot point of St. Lo. Troops were moving into position all along the First Army front for that great push which would spring the secretly activated Third Army out into Brittany, and the First Army toward Falaise and beyond.

This journey to combat heralded the Ninth Division's entry into the well-remembered *Battle of the Hedgerows,* which lasted from July 1-25. It also was a battle of the swamps for the Ninth. There were inundations, hedgerows, steep-sided gulleys, brush and narrow local roads, which were nothing more than paved deathtraps. The wily enemy resorted to all sorts of trickery, even to the extent of wearing American uniforms in order to entice and kill GIs. To add to this misery there were S.P. guns, *Panzer* tanks, and the rainy season had begun.

Hedgerows caused the most trouble, since they formed a multitude of defensive lines upon which retreating Nazis could fall. This was the *Bocage* country, the battlefield composed of small compartments (fields) separated by hedgerows . . . solid earthen mounds, rising to a three foot bank and then capped with four to five feet of hedge. These natural walls were two to three feet thick and contained brush, briar, vines, mud and sometimes wire. Unless the hedgerows were blasted, neither 57mm anti-tank guns nor tanks were able to move forward safely; and the former were of little use anyway, except on the roads. The enemy often was just on the other side of the hedgerow—listening, planning and heckling. After taking one row, the slow, tortuous procedure had to be repeated . . . time after time. It was dangerous fighting with each man on his own, and often 300 yards constituted a good day's gain.

* * * *

THE VII Corps was attacking with the 4th, Ninth and 83rd Divisions abreast. On the east (left) flank was the 30th Infantry Division of the XIX Corps, coordinating with the Ninth. The latter faced the Germans on a line which ran approximately "in an arc from le Port around the peninsula between the TAUTE and the CANAL DE VIRE, to LE DESERT." In addition to its normal attachments, the Ninth Division was reinforced strongly by the 18th F.A. Group, most of the 113th Cavalry Group and Combat Command *A* of the 3rd Armored Division.

The initial mission of the Ninth was twofold: cleaning out a powerful enemy on the island of Tribehou and cutting the Bois du Hommet. Since the German defenses facing the Ninth Division were directed generally against an attack from the north, General Eddy planned to push west, capturing the German positions with one sweeping flank maneuver. Strong resistance was counted upon at Bois du Hommet (Hommet Woods) and Tribehou Island, but the combat teams were well-balanced for any eventuality . . . with one company of medium tanks and one company of tank destroyers (from CC*A*) at-

LE DESERT: PUT TO A GOOD USE

tached to each regiment and the 113th Cavalry Group attached to the 60th Infantry.

July 10th opened this very tiresome and exciting campaign phase for the Ninth. A great deal of mortar and small-arms fire from across the marshes met the Division's morning drive. At 8 A.M. the 113th Cavalry Group pushed forward, while the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 60th moved out abreast and eventually through the cavalry. Their goal was the peninsula between the Taute River and the Vire Canal.

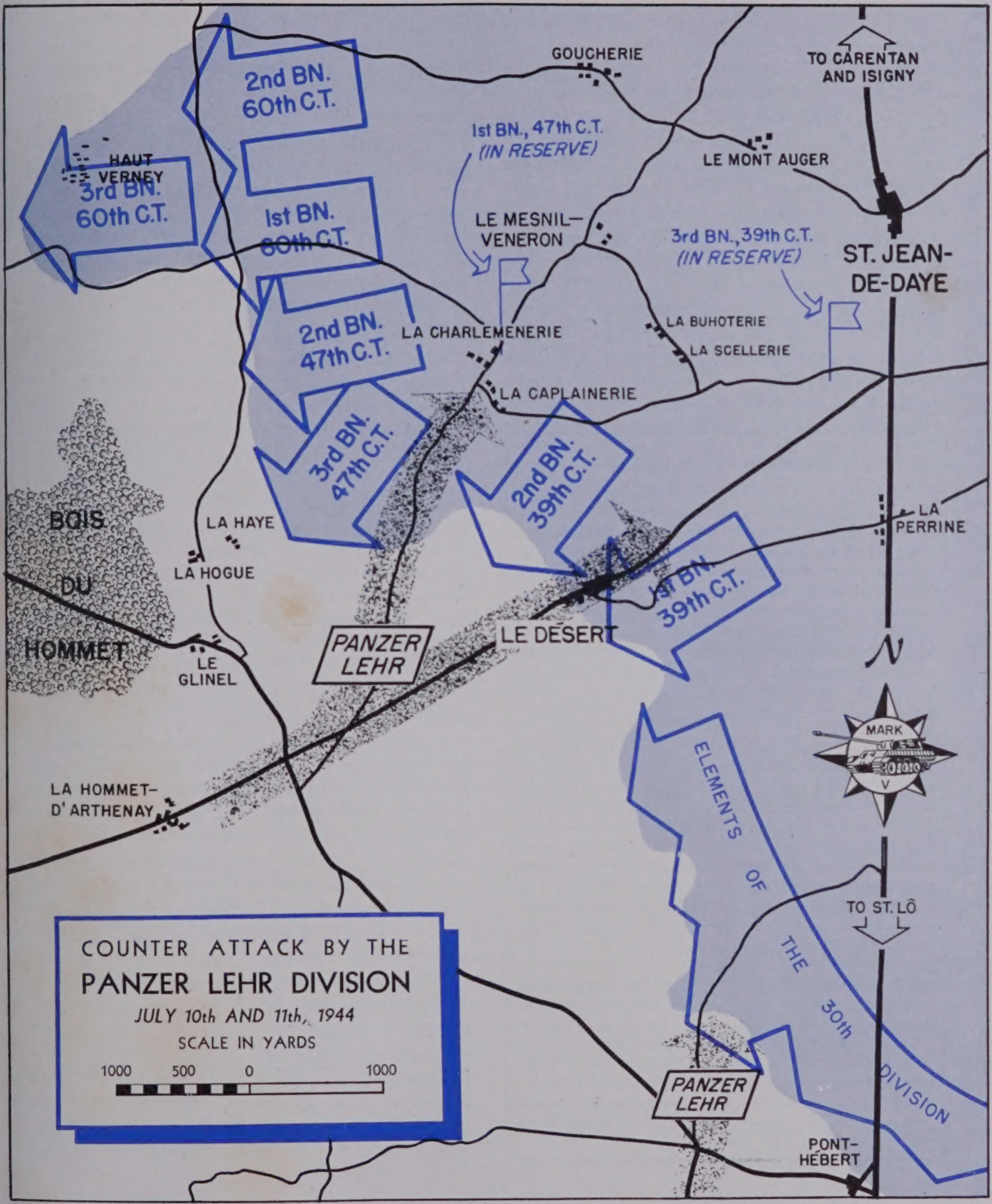
Small fire fights were waged by the *Go-Devil* 2nd Battalion, which reached the peninsula at noon. The 1st Battalion met great resistance at the edge of its objective, but managed to move slowly ahead; while in the 3rd Battalion sector, patrols sent west toward the island of Tribehou met heavy mortar, machine-gun and grenade fire, forcing the Americans to retire.

Meanwhile, the 47th Infantry awaited a bombing mission on Bois du Hommet and other strongpoints of its zone. This accomplished, the regiment moved forward with its 2nd and 3rd Battalions in the lead. The enemy was full of fight and at 1:30 P.M., as the 3rd Battalion pushed through La Charlemenarie, "A dangerous gap occurred with the 39th Infantry on the left." But Company *K* was able to close this somewhat, and at 9:40 P.M. the objective was reached.

Because of heavy mortar and small arms fire, only 300 yards were gained during the 39th's morning advance from hedgerow to hedgerow. A well-concealed and well-dug-in enemy was opposing the *Falcons,* and resistance continued throughout the day. The most noteworthy capture was that of Le Desert by the 1st Battalion.

* * * *

JULY 11th was a day of excitement and heroism. Germany's finest armored division, the *Panzer Lehr* had been chosen to lead a breakthrough to Isigny which would cut the Allied beachhead in two,


COUNTER ATTACK BY THE PANZER LEHR DIVISION

JULY 10th AND 11th, 1944

SCALE IN YARDS

1000 500 0 1000
GOUCHERIE
TO CARENTAN AND ISIGNY
2nd BN. 60th C.T.
Ist BN., 47th C.T. *(IN RESERVE)*
LE MONT AUGER
HAUT VERNEY
3rd BN. 60th C.T.
Ist BN. 60th C.T.
LE MESNIL—VENERON
3rd BN., 39th C.T. *(IN RESERVE)*
ST. JEAN-DE-DAYE
2nd BN. 47th C.T.
LA CHARLEMENERIE
LA BUHOTERIE
LA SCELLERIE
LA CAPLAINERIE
3rd BN. 47th C.T.
2nd BN. 39th C.T.
BOIS DU HOMMET
LA HAYE
LA HOGUE
LA PERRINE
1st BN. 39th C.T.
PANZER LEHR
LE DESERT
LE GLINEL
N
MARK V
LA HOMMET-D'ARTHENAY
ELEMENTS OF THE 30th DIVISION
TO ST. LÔ
PANZER LEHR
PONT-HEBERT

if successful. Throughout the preceding day the 39th Infantry had met such great resistance as to preclude its advance beyond Le Desert, and a wide gap of almost 1,000 yards developed between the *Falcons* and the 47th on their right . . . where the *Raiders* were driving on Bois du Hommet as the 39th turned southwest.

Meanwhile, the enemy mounted his first real counter-offensive of the hedgerow campaign. According to prisoners the Germans sought capture of St. Jean-de-Daye first, and several tank scares bore out this fact. Some armor did get into the Division area, and reports have placed their advance inside the American lines as "up to 2,000 yards." This entry spelled death and defeat for those *Panzers* which were able to break through, however, as a thoroughly devastating counterattack made military hash of *Panzer Lehr*.

Distinguished Unit Citation

Company A and Company C, 899th Tank Destroyer Battalion, are cited for outstanding performance of duty in action on 11 July 1944 near St. Jean de Daye, France. *Company A and Company C* were supporting the 39th Infantry in a defense role near St. Jean de Daye. At 0200 hours on the morning of 11 July 1944 the enemy launched a combined armored and infantry attack in this sector. Two columns of heavy tanks with supporting infantry smashed through and penetrated to the rear of this position in an attempt to capture St. Jean De Daye and to sever the Allied beachhead. Outgunned and outnumbered, and despite the fact that enemy infantry threatened to overrun their tank destroyers, the men of *Company A and Company C* fearlessly remained in position and fired on enemy tanks wherever discernible in the darkness, fully realizing that the flash of each round would draw not only artillery and tank fire but also small-arms fire as well. As daylight appeared, *Company A and Company C,* aware that their 3-inch guns could not penetrate the heavy frontal armor of the Panther tanks, boldly maneuvered their tank destroyers under close enemy observation to flanking positions where effective fire was placed on the enemy tanks. Forced to fight at extremely close quarters and at point-blank ranges, the officers and men of *Company A and Company C* gallantly and courageously repelled numerous attempts of the enemy to seize these positions. So effective was their fire that the enemy was forced to withdraw their remaining tanks from the action, leaving the infantry in small isolated pockets which were quickly overcome by our forces. The individual courage, valor, and tenacity displayed by the personnel of *Company A and Company C* in the face of superior odds were in keeping with the highest traditions of the armed forces and are worthy of high praise.

As midnight passed, *Falcon* outposts remarked that they heard tracked vehicles to their front and sounds of the enemy digging in. Concurrent reports from the 30th Division indicated that many enemy vehicles were moving toward the Ninth from the northwest. With these warnings sounded, Divarty prepared for action at 3 A.M. and tank destroyers were rushed to the scene.

Two strong enemy columns struck at 3:30 A.M. One column rolled almost due north up the unimproved road to La Charlemenerie, hitting hard at the 1st *Raider* Battalion (in reserve). The other column smashed through Le Desert, separating the 39th Infantry's 2nd and 1st Battalions. At 5:25 A.M. the C.P. of the *Raider* 3rd Battalion was overrun, and by now the communications net linking the 39th, 47th and Division was out. Since enemy tanks and infantry had worked in between the *Falcons* and the *Raiders,* a degree of confusion reigned behind the American lines . . . temporarily. The 39th's 1st Battalion withdrew 600 yards, as did other units; but the men of the Ninth soon pushed out again. The *Raider* 3rd Battalion reorganized hastily and recaptured its C.P., without losing a piece of equipment or any documents.

By now the Division had learned of the situation via radio and aid was rushed up speedily. The *Go-Devil* 2nd Battalion was dispatched to the rear and west flanks of the 47th; tank destroyers from the 899th T.D. Battalion (Major (Lt. Colonel) Hoyt K. Lorance) battled wave after wave of enemy *Panzers,* and the artillery opened up with amazing speed and accuracy. In addition, the 3rd Battalion of the 39th was dispatched to halt further penetration.

Cut off and isolated within the Division zone, the foe was annihilated bit-by-bit. He tried several counterattacks and was beaten back each time; by afternoon the German mission had failed miserably. Unflinchingly, the 899th Tank Destroyer Battalion had stood up to the better armed vehicles of the enemy and destroyed them by bravery and tenacity. The infantry of the Ninth attacked and counter-

Distinguished Unit Citation

The *2d Battalion, 39th Infantry,* is cited for extraordinary heroism in action on 11 and 12 July 1944 at Le Desert, France, when the battalion fought off and crushed an enemy armored threat to break through to Isigny and separate the Allied forces. The battalion was in position on 11 July 1944 and prepared to attack when an enemy battalion, supported by 16 Panther tanks launched a fierce attack at 0330 hours. Part of the enemy tanks bypassed the front lines, entered the rear areas, and threatened the battalion command post. Fighting desperately, the battalion blocked the road leading to the command post as bazooka teams, men armed with grenade launchers, and the 57mm anti-tank gun crews courageously engaged the heavily armored tanks at close range while the tank destroyers were being moved into position. By 0600 hours several direct assaults had been beaten off and the battalion was employing every man and every weapon available to repulse the attack. After all the wire lines were cut, the radios kept constant communication, giving the battalion commander tactical control over his companies. The battalion command post came under intense tank and heavy machine-gun fire, but was quickly moved about 500 yards and continued operations. With violent fighting raging throughout the area, the men built up crude roadblocks and, by repeated individual feats of self-sacrificing heroism, boldly rushed the tanks, killing the German Infantry riding them, and closely following the armor. By sheer courage the battalion held the enemy at bay until an air mission and the tank destroyers arrived at about 1000 hours. Despite the shock of the fanatical enemy attack, the men held their ground while the airplanes bombed and strafed dangerously close to their positions and killed the tank crews as they tried to escape from some of the tanks. Six tanks trying to escape were destroyed by the tank destroyers and bazooka teams. With the road now open, more tank destroyers and tanks were employed and the battalion quickly regrouped and counterattacked, destroying or driving back all the enemy in the area. Following an artillery preparation on 12 July 1944, the battalion attacked and made rapid progress until stiff resistance was met from enemy doggedly defending the high ground. With gallant determination the men engaged the enemy in bitter hand-to-hand fighting and made progress until the Germans laid down an intense long-range artillery barrage and counterattacked with the support of 10 Panther tanks. Again the troops engaged the tanks with the same relentless determination, unwavering when their weapons failed to penetrate the heavy armor of the Panther tanks, and fought without fear, methodically destroying the enemy. One company suffered heavy casualties from tanks that broke into the area. The men quickly regrouped, however, and held the enemy off until relieved by another company. Confronted with the second tank attack in 2 days, the dogged determination of the men of the battalion, combined with tremendous and effective fire power of the supporting tank destroyers and tanks, repulsed the enemy with heavy losses. The valiant fighting of the *2d Battalion* defeated some of Germany's finest troops and destroyed their final attempt to break through to Isigny and separate the Allied forces. The enemy lost at least 16 tanks, over 130 men as prisoners, and approximately 200 killed, compared to approximately 84 casualties suffered by the battalion. The bold and intrepid stand of the *2d Battalion, 39th Infantry,* exemplied the highest type of courage and determination. The heroic actions of the men were an outstanding example of esprit de corps and are worthy of the highest ideals of the military service.

attacked with gusto. The T.D.'s destroyed twelve *Mark V* tanks and one *Mark IV;* Division Artillery and air force support accounted for almost two dozen more, with a huge enemy force routed.

The results were a tribute to the tenacity of America's citizen army. Le Mesnil-Veneron, La Buhoterie, La Scellerie, La Caplainerie, Le Desert, La Charlemenerie and St. Jean-de-Daye remained in American hands. By 9 P.M. the Ninth Division had regained its former positions and had helped destroy the usefulness of Germany's finest—the *Panzer Lehr.*

* * * *

CLOSER examination of the breakthrough area revealed the complete destruction of the *Panzer Lehr*. Enemy tanks clogged the roads and highway hedgerows showed signs of action. From battered St. Jean-de-Daye forward, the French countryside was snipped and churned . . . marred as only war can disfigure. But soldiers have little time to eval-

THE REMAINS OF PANZER LEHR

uate and explore the events of yesterday . . . especially under fire. More combat was promised on July 12th, and *that* was the problem—not what *had* happened.

Current strategy called for the 47th to attack south while the remainder of the Ninth flanked the enemy from the northeast. Tank action had not as yet died down, and during this day the AAF discovered, bombed and strafed an enemy tank column and the fortified positions to the front.

Colonel Flint's 39th Infantry pushed off against light opposition and passed through the war-torn village of Le Desert, enroute southeast along the main road. Opposition became pronounced and soon the leading elements were under machine-gun and small-arms fire, which sprayed forth from emplaced positions. At 7:30 P.M. a very strong but local counterattack was launched against Company *E*, and heavy losses included all the company officers. German infantry—reinforced with a self-propelled gun—had flanked the company. But a lieutenant of the tank destroyer attachment reorganized Company *E*, and the unit held out against all assaults. Meanwhile, another company of the 39th struck at the foe, regaining the 100 yards which had been lost.

In the Raider sector the 3rd Battalion had a particularly rough day, as house-to-house fighting developed in the dwellings which lay in the path of the regiment. Only the 60th C.T. had a fairly easy time, after an eight-battalion concentration of artillery facilitated its drive forward. That night Bois du Hommet appeared to have been cleaned of the enemy, as was the area all the way to Tribehou Island.

It rained quite heavily on the 13th and no air support was available. Nonetheless, the artillery took its place once more and the infantry jumped into the attack. This was a day of hard fighting and one of concrete results. The entire island of Tribehou was secured, and an advance of 1,000 yards on the right flank and 2,000 yards on the left had brought the Division almost to the important crossroads town of Les Champs de Losque.

But the terrain was as much an enemy as the Germans. Narrow corridors of advance held up maneuvers and the monotonous hedgerows became increasingly harder to wrest from their Nazi defenders. Casualty lists had been large and included such familiar names as that of Colonel Kauffman, who was wounded severely.

By July 15th it was believed that the enemy's main line of resistance had been reached, but the drive continued. Against a stubborn foe the heights around Les Champs de Losque were captured on the 16th by the 60th Infantry; while the 39th went through the hedgerows to reach but not capture the town of Esglandes which was held by too many tanks and "other defenses."

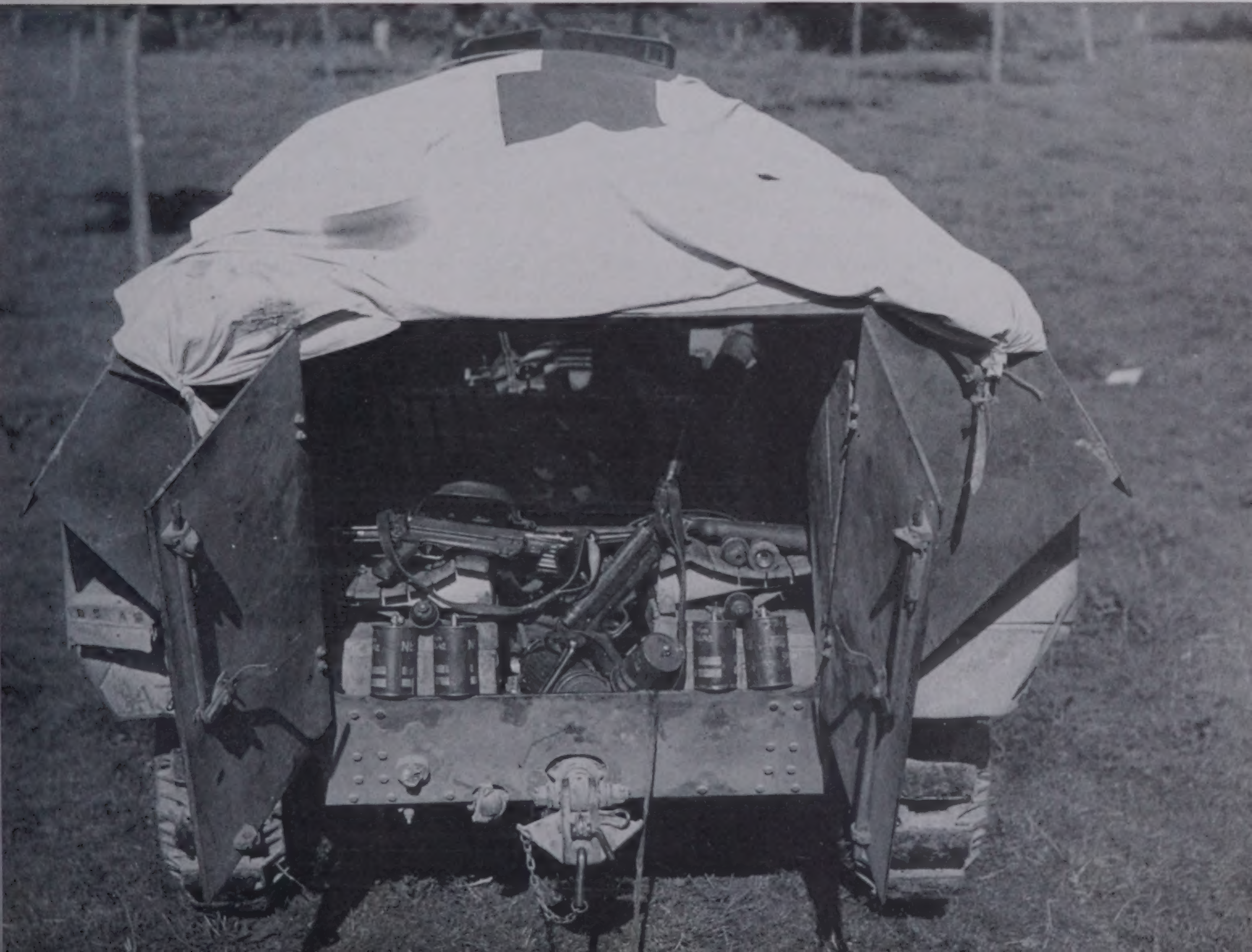
The battle against Esglandes continued on July 17th, and by now it was realized that the main threat which the Germans possessed was their use of tanks. These were unable to halt patrols of the 39th from going over the St. Lo-Periers Road during the night of July 17-18, however, and thus that road was cut for the first time . . . by the Ninth Division.

* * * *

WHILE the remainder of the First Army had stayed in place, the Division pushed on to consolidate and gain position areas from which it could take its place in the spearhead of the big offensive. Jockeying into position was difficult after July 18th —and until the day of the offensive—for rain and mud hindered operations.

Meanwhile, the blueprint of victory had been drawn up; and during July 19th, Corps issued its

CAPTURED GERMAN "AMBULANCE" HAD STRANGE CARGO



Field Order #6, which outlined the part that the Ninth Division would play in *Operation Cobra* . . . the plan to break through and strike out into France. The Ninth prepared for its role by continuing to clean out all opposition to the St. Lo-Periers Road within its zone. Several false starts were made on the huge push but each was stopped because of foul weather. Finally, on July 24th the skies showed promise of clearing and *D-Day* was set for the following day . . . to be preceded by the biggest softening up bombing in Air Force history.

* * * *

THAT called a halt to the Normandy campaign . . . the end of hedgerows and calvados . . . the end of rich farms and fresh eggs . . . and an occasional French steak.

In looking back—from the beaches of Varreville to the St. Lo-Periers Road—the men of the Ninth could view their achievements with pride. They had crossed the Douve, cut the Cotentin Peninsula, stopped three mad counterattacks by the Germans to break out of the Cherbourg trap, and finally overwhelmed the enemy, to become the first Allied unit to begin liberation of the city of Cherbourg. They alone had been given the task—a task they quickly fulfilled—of cleaning out the remaining Germans in the Cap de la Hague Peninsula. And now, after stopping one of the most fanatical attacks—that of the *Panzer Lehr*—and pacing the First Army drive south, the Ninth Division was prepared to spearhead a new drive . . . the breakthrough across the St. Lo-Periers Road.

But there was a point of sadness. In pushing forward, many good Americans had lost their lives in the jungle of hedgerows and swamps. Among these was one whose name probably will be linked with the Ninth Division as long as men can read and remember. On July 23rd Colonel *Paddy* Flint was hit by a sniper while up front. He fell smiling, as a sergeant companion spoke, "You can't kill an Irishman, you can only make him mad!"

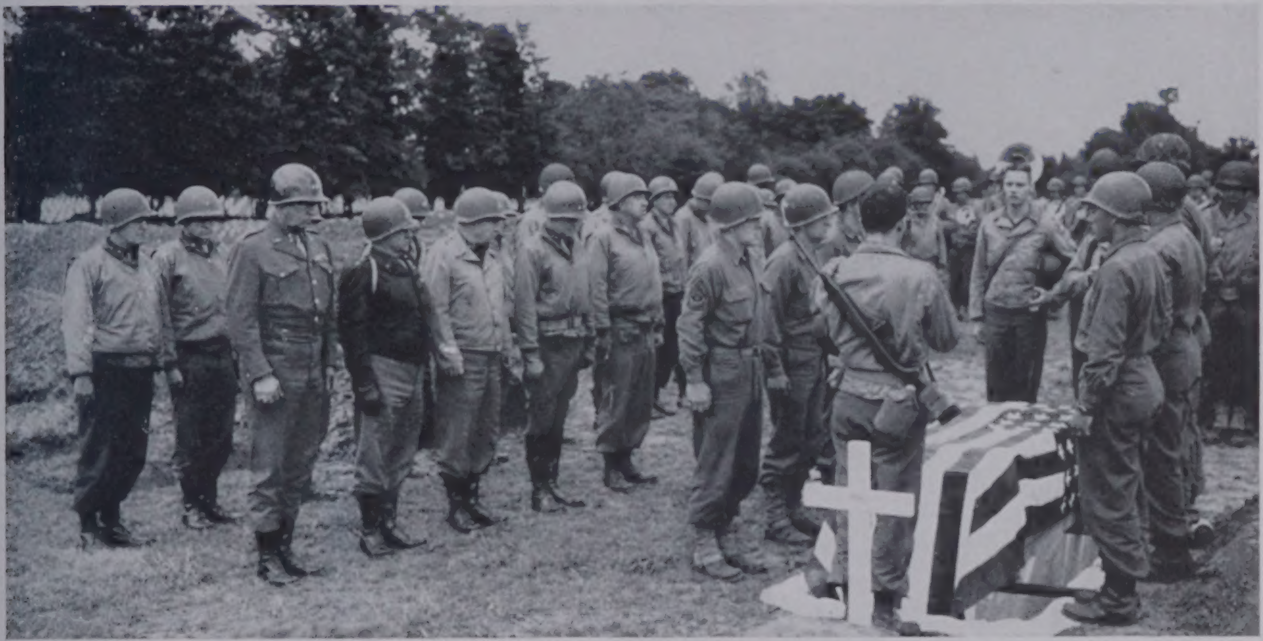
But *Paddy* died the next day. His passing caused mourning among those who knew, not only in the 39th Infantry, but throughout the entire Division as well. General Eddy summed it up when he said:

"His loss cannot be measured by words."

Yet many *go west* in combat and the fight must continue. As Lt. Colonel (Colonel) Van H. Bond took command of the 39th Infantry, the guns of the Division pointed south. There lay tomorrow . . . the enemy. Many more good men would be lost before the final victory was won.

C'est la guerre! . . . Fortune de la guerre!

Section VII photography credits: Pages 162, 165, 175, 182, 187, 190, 194, 197 are Official U.S. Army Signal Corps Photos; 166, 186, 195 by 39th Infantry; 171, 180 by Author; 176 by 15th Engineers; 183 submitted by Simon A. Garber.



"Yesterday morning a soldier of the 39th Infantry was buried in the American cemetery at St. Mere Eglise.

"The grave he now occupies is a simple one—a soldier's grave, no different from the other graves of your comrades row on row beside it. Only one thing about it will make you and me remember it for the rest of our lives—the dog tag on the cross reading 'Harry A. Flint.' That dog tag doesn't make much of an epitaph, but the soldier lying beneath would be the first to say 'Hit don't make no difference.' It *does* make a difference, however, to every one of you and to me to know that Paddy Flint will lead you no longer. His loss cannot be measured by words, but his death means to your regiment, to this division and to the United States Army the loss of a gifted and lovable leader, and to each of us the passing of a personal friend.

"One thing will never be lost—our memory of him as your regimental commander in Sicily, in England, and in Normandy. It is this memory which will carry your new commander and every fighting soldier of you in the same direction in which Paddy was leading you when he died.

"Keep that memory with you—depend upon your new leader—carry your fight to the finish. I am going to do the same."

—Major General Manton S. Eddy
(Letter to 39th Infantry, July 27, 1944)

Section VIII

The Chase

Northern France—Belgium

H-HOUR was set for eleven o'clock that morning. It was July 25, 1944—the day when mighty *Operation Cobra* was to unleash its deadly striking power and break out of Normandy. For nights and days, frontline troops had shivered and dug in against the weather and the enemy. Jumping off depended upon the Army Air Forces mounting their part of the offensive, and the weather had been bad—so cloudy that the operation had been delayed several days. By now, even the least air-minded GI knew that bombardiers needed a reasonably clear sky to drop their loads with precision, and that the infantry must wait and dig and hope until the weather broke.

Those days of consolidation and waiting were miserable ones for almost everyone on the line . . . the misery of hedgerows, rain and mud. But now it was the 25th and *Cobra* was on again. Although billowy chunks of clouds still floated overhead, the Army's meteorologists had forecast a break in the weather by morning. At least the bombardiers would be able to see their pin-point targets.

On the ground, veteran footsloggers were ready with a simple but effective plan. The Ninth, 4th and 30th Infantry Divisions were to break through across the St. Lo-Periers Road following a devastating aerial bombardment, the greatest yet attempted. From a narrow sector, which stretched five miles west of battered St. Lo, these divisions would fan out to form protection on the flanks of the VII Corps. To the rear of this spearhead, one infantry and two armored divisions stood by. They were the second wave, charged with the exploitation and expansion of the breakthrough.

On either side of the VII Corps, other First Army units were to hold fast initially; then within a few days the entire line would erupt into the heart of France. From the very beginning, *Operation Cobra* depended upon the success of the advance within the narrow VII Corps zone . . . and the progress of VII Corps rested upon the exactitude of more than 3,000 planes and their crews, enacting the greatest mass bombing of history.

Ninth Division troops had been withdrawn from their forward positions for distances of 800 to 1,700 yards—back to a bomb-safety line. Emplaced behind them were thirty-odd battalions of medium and heavy artillery, prepared to add their punitive power to the offensive. American front lines had been marked by standard marking strips patterned upon the ground; enemy defenses were bombarded with colored smoke shells by artillery . . . a goal-post line for the air force. Every one was supposed to remain in a foxhole or shelter previous to H-Hour, for the possibility of error from the air was great. This was the first really big coordinated land-air operation—and it was the dawn of a new type of warfare.

Reduced to its simplest form, *Operation Cobra* was designed to crack the efficient VII Corps through German defenses between Marigny and St. Gilles, using the St. Lo-Periers Road as a kickoff line. One spearhead was to push west from Marigny toward Coutances, isolating the enemy facing the VIII Corps. Other elements of VII Corps were to move south and southeast to the eastern bank of the River Seinne, thereby blocking German reinforcements to the north. An overwhelming striking force of 140,000 troops concentrated within the narrow breakthrough zone portended the First Army desire, and its necessity, of breaking out of the hedgerow country and into Northern France.

At twenty minutes before ten, the unmistakable drone of American aircraft was heard from the heavens. They were the middleweights of the air force . . . 350 fighter-bombers, which were about to drop their payloads of 500-pounders over a three-hundred-yard strip along the road. Clouds had hidden the planes originally, but as the airmen approached their target—which was across the highway from the Ninth Division—the clouds seemed to part, and the sky became backdrop to a stupendous drama of aviation history. For twenty minutes, speedy craft whined and zoomed down to earth, suddenly jerking skyward and unleashing death and devastation upon enemy forward positions. Those who witnessed this well-timed bombing were rewarded with an unforgettable picture of air support at its best.

By now the *Flak* guns had limbered up and the fighter-bombers left the stage, as the *heavies* roared over to do their bit. Over 1,500 *Liberators* and *Flying Fortresses* began arriving upon the scene . . . to churn and disrupt an area five miles wide and two miles deep. Then came 400 mediums. As far as the eye could see, there were masses of these mighty bombers; it appeared as though they could have frightened the enemy by numerical strength alone. They seemed to sweep forward, as unstoppable as the flows of lava from a volcano in eruption; as steady as the hum of presses in a newspaper plant; as deadly as nothing before conceived by human imagination. In its moment before the spotlight, the air force was breath-taking.

But it was death-dealing as well, and fate proved that fact on the 25th. *Flak* bit the air from the German defenses, and bombs and motors snarled a reply from above. Smoke, dust and the pandemonium of battle had started the engagement; soon it would be the infantry's turn to sweep forward. Suddenly, it appeared as though something had gone awry. As the leading elements gazed upon the great billowy wall to their front, they could see it slowly rolling back. The wind was blowing this mass over the attacking ground troops and there was no way to call off what had been started.

The conglomeration of smoke and dust began to obscure the bomb line and the safety line. It sifted over the forward troops in some sectors and kept moving rearward. Many flying crews were unable to ascertain the correct bomb line and released their clusters right into the smoke. Unfortunately, tons of explosives missed their mark and fell short . . . raining down upon friendly troops.

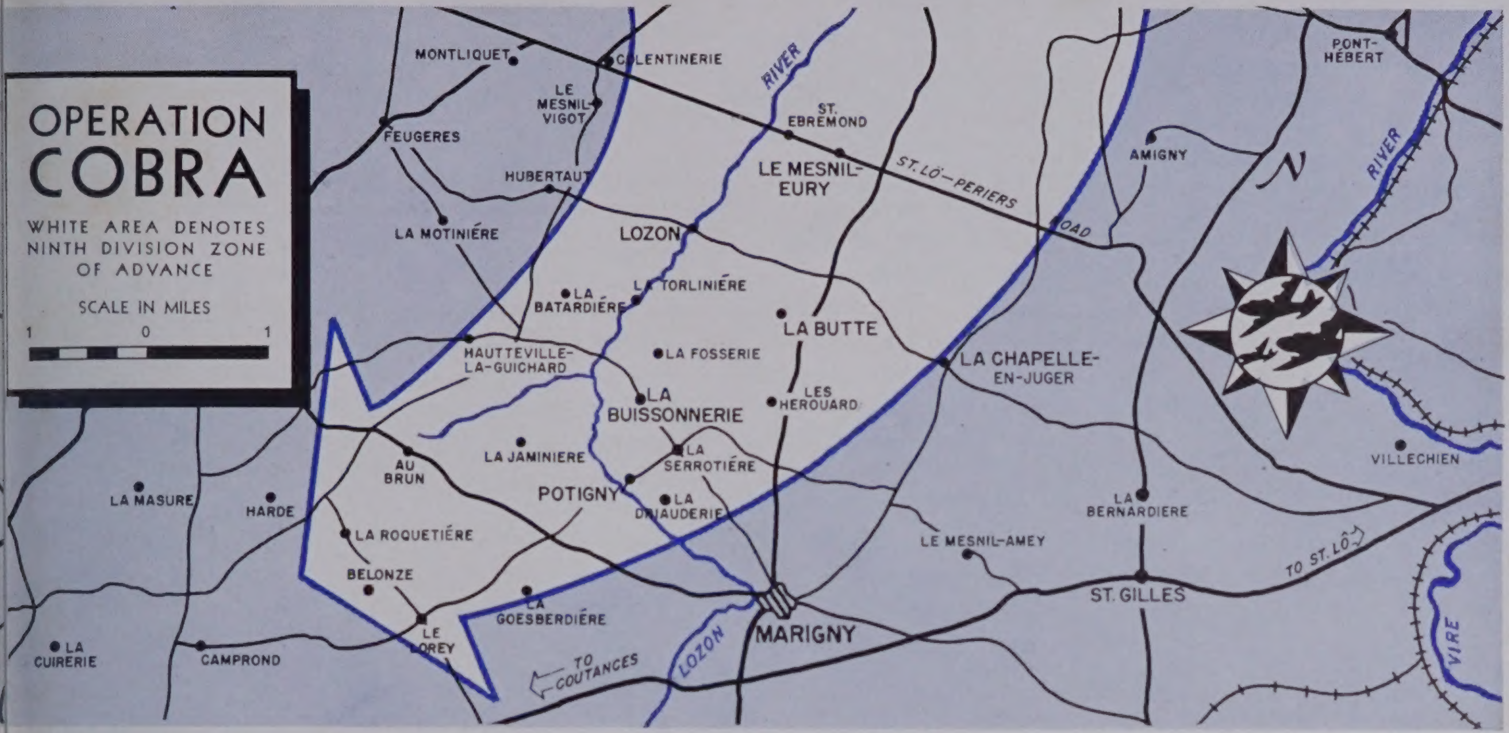
In the course of this tragic set-back, over 600 American casualties were sustained by the 47th Infantry of the Ninth, and the 120th Infantry of the 30th Division; included among these was Army Ground Force commander, Lt. General Leslie J. McNair, who was watching the operation from a frontline foxhole. Most of the *Raider* losses occurred in the 3rd Battalion, which was mauled badly. The battalion had been hit so hard that the entire command group, with the exception of the battalion commander and his executive became casualties. Losses were severe enough to necessitate replacement of this battalion by the 1st Battalion of the 47th, and the 39th's 1st Battalion came up on line from reserve.

To the everlasting valor of the *Raiders*, it must be said that they took their tragic and unforeseen punishment like veterans. Many realized that the error was unavoidable. And some GIs rose from their foxholes to wave the planes over, as if they were battlefield traffic cops . . . despite the bombing of their own positions. One observer from another division, witnessing these actions, remarked, "I wish our troops had that *esprit de corps!*"

* * * *

THE bombing had ended now and the *B-17's*, *B-24's* and mediums were groaning into the distance . . . infantry all along the line was moving to cross the St. Lo-Periers Road and smash toward their objectives. On the other side of the line, German infantry and artillery was dazed and chopped up. The enemy's large weapons had been covered with dirt or destroyed, and his communications were severed beyond immediate repair. Nevertheless, several emplacements had weathered the storm and still were in operation, particularly automatic weapons positions.

The 60th C.T. thrust forward on schedule, battering through defenses which were backed by mortar and artillery fire and pushing well ahead despite flanking fire on the 3rd Battalion. By afternoon the regiment had captured both of its *D-Day* objectives, becoming enroute the first unit of the offensive to


OPERATION COBRA
WHITE AREA DENOTES NINTH DIVISION ZONE OF ADVANCE
SCALE IN MILES
1
0
1
MONTLIQUET
COLENTINERIE
LE MESNIL-VIGOT
FEUGERES
HUBERTAU
ST. EBREMOND
LE MESNIL-EURY
ST. LÔ—PERIERS ROAD
RIVER
AMIGNY
PONT-HÉBERT
N
RIVER
LA MOTINIÈRE
LOZON
LA TORLINIÈRE
LA BATARDIÈRE
LA BUTTE
LA CHAPELLE-EN-JUGER
HAUTTEVILLE-LA-GUICHARD
LA FOSSERIE
LA BUISSONNERIE
LES HEROUARD
AU BRUN
LA JAMINIERE
LA SERROTIÈRE
VILLECHIEN
LA MASURE
HARDE
POTIGNY
LA DRIAUDERIE
LA BERNARDIERE
LA ROQUETIÈRE
LE MESNIL-AMEY
TO ST. LÔ
BELONZE
LA GOESBERDIÈRE
ST. GILLES
LE LOREY
MARIGNY
LOZON
LA CUIRERIE
CAMPROND
TO COUTANCES
VIRE

cut the St. Lo-Periers Road permanently. Further left, the 47th Infantry was unable to jump off at 11 A.M., as the result of the damage brought by the bombing. Nevertheless, an hour and a half later the combat team was picking its way south over the churned earth.

The Germans had developed strong field fortifications on the north side of the road, and these held out against the *Raider* advance. Fortunately, the 60th already had taken rapid strides forward in its zone; and while a small force from the 47th engaged in diversionary fire fight with the enemy along the highway, the main body maneuvered through the sector of the 60th C.T. This outflanking enabled the *Raiders* to cross the St. Lo-Periers line by 4 P.M., and they continued advancing until darkness called a halt on the high ground 1,000 yards to the south. On the Division left flank, the 39th's 1st Battalion waged a persistent offensive battle and finally broke through a line of enemy fortifications to join flanks with the 8th Infantry of the 4th Division at La Chapelle. And thus ended July 25, 1944.

Once more, the Ninth had spearheaded an important drive and once again the results were outstanding. During the operations of July 25th, the Division had chopped through the main defenses south of the road, becoming the first outfit across; it had advanced three miles despite pre-jump off losses which would have stopped many units. A path had been cleared for the 1st Infantry and 3rd Armored Divisions to exploit the breakthrough behind the Ninth. Keeping pace on the left, the 4th Infantry Division had pushed ahead as well, and now the destruction of two German armies was about to begin.

The successful attack begun the day previous had enabled the First Army to follow through with its plans on the 26th. At seven o'clock that morning, units of the 1st Infantry Division supported by Combat Command *B* of the 3rd Armored Division, crossed the St. Lo-Periers Road traveling through the breach made by the Ninth Division. This second wave quickly reached and captured Marigny against slight resistance, for the Ninth had cleared the way. While the Ninth became flank protection to the west, the 1st Division and CC*B* exploited the penetration southwest and south—a follow-up which was being duplicated in the center and left flank of VII Corps as well.

Undoubtedly, the enemy was unable to cope with the concentrated and clever strategy of the advance —an offensive which was *all-out*. Even the Ninth

THE BREAKTHROUGH

on the flank pushed to the west while accomplishing its mission of protecting the right wing of the Corps. From the beginning, certain features of the breakthrough were outstanding: there was speed, which meant all non-essentials were stripped off; there was push, with all units driving forward without regard to cost or flank support; there was by-passing, which contained the enemy until objectives were taken; and, finally there was superiority in the air—an advantage which augured the death of the German transportation system in France.

One spearhead of the VII Corps thrust was heading west, aimed at isolating the enemy in front of the VIII Corps. As mentioned previously, the right flank of this drive was the right flank of the penetration, and it was held by the Ninth Division. General Eddy had pointed his team west, and it was now that opposition stiffened. With the 60th C.T. leading (assisted by the attached and ill-fated 3rd Battalion of the 47th) the Ninth drove ahead. German infantry evidently had recovered enough strength to make a determined stand, and the doughboys were able to advance only after repelling an enemy attempt to break of the VII Corps encirclement. After that delay, however, the Ninth broke through and by nightfall had accomplished its missions for the day. Recovering slowly from the aerial mauling it had received prior to the jump off, the *Raider* 3rd Battalion closed in on Lozon for the evening.

To the right of the *Go-Devils,* the 39th's 2nd Battalion eliminated a German pocket in the vicinity of Le Mesnil-Eury then pointed toward La Butte, where it joined forces with the *Falcon* 3rd Battalion. Together, they launched an attack against the roadnet one kilometer southeast of La Buissonnerie, capturing it by 3:45 the following morning. From here, the 39th pushed on Potigny, encountering and defeating a belligerent enemy enroute.

Results of July 26-27 were gratifying to the Ninth. A First Army report describes the period well: *The 9th Division not only held its flank position, but made some advances to the west to widen the breach.* But the breakthrough task of the veteran Ninth

Division was nearing completion. By now the entire First Army was fighting forward, and the Ninth became *pinched out* by the 83rd Division (VIII Corps) on July 28th.

With this action, *Operation Cobra* came to a successful conclusion for the Ninth, and the Division moved to an assembly area near Marigny—to enjoy a short period of rest and recuperation. That this period off the line was needed appeared quite evident. During the six days preceding the offensive, the weather had been miserably wet; and men along the front had sloshed around in their bleak, uncomfortable, muddy foxholes—oftentimes wet to the skin. There was a need for replacements, too. The growing roster of casualties bore witness to the part which the men of the Ninth had played since landing on the beach.

* * * *

FOR the next few days the Ninth Division remained in Corps reserve. This rest might have been an *anniversary present,* for on August 1st the Division celebrated its fourth year of reactivation, while preparing for more combat. August 1st heralded a change in the status of the American forces on the continent as well. General Bradley's fifteen-division Army was split into two groups—one to form the First Army under Lt. General (General) Courtney N. Hodges, and the other to become the Third Army of General Patton. Commanding both

MARIGNY: ENGINEERS CLEARING RUBBLE

armies—in the name of the 12th Army Group—was General Bradley.

This change in command ushered in not only the month of August, but a period of reckoning for the German army of occupation in France. August 1944 was the month of the *rat race,* a period when the Ninth Infantry Division advanced 403 miles from Marigny to Dizy-le-Gros, a time of grave problems for the wire men of the Ninth Signal Company—and for the Division spearheads, which advanced so fast that they literally ran out of maps. Those were the memorable days when the *First Team of the First Army,* the Ninth and 1st Infantry and the 3rd Armored Divisions, spearheaded the drive north. But August was a month of hard fighting too, from its very first day.

While the Ninth had been preparing for its next engagement, VII Corps troops had broken through the German defenses south of Villedieu-les-Poeles—an important crossroads approximately eleven miles northeast of Avranches. On August 1st the Ninth was ordered to exploit this breakthrough, attacking in a southeasterly direction and enveloping the left flank of the enemy. That evening the Division moved into the vicinity of Maupertuis preparatory to the attack. Meanwhile, the 60th's 2nd Battalion went on line a few miles south, where it relieved a portion of the 8th Infantry west of Percy.

The Division main objectives in this envelopment were to cross a combination of hills and woods, eventually seizing the high ground and road centers along a line which ran through the junction town of Gathemo, south down the main road to Perriers-en-Beaufice and thence further south to Les Monts-D'Eron, a hilly area east of Cherence le Roussel.

On the Corps left, progress was steadier. The 9th Division went in above Villedieu and struck in a southeasterly direction. On 2 August the division cut the road northeast out of Villedieu in strength. Before noon of 3 August it advanced 3,000 yards . . . . —First Army Report of Operations.

On August 2nd, the 47th Infantry passed through the 8th Infantry and launched an attack to the southeast at 9 A.M. There was little opposition initially, but before long the leading 1st and 2nd Battalions were engaged by self-propelled artillery, small arms, tank and mortar fire of such intensity as to slow down their advance—and the regiment dug in at 8 P.M. On the other flank, the *Go-Devils* went into action near Percy picking their way slowly forward. During the following day, both the 47th and the 60th continued to advance against anti-personnel and *Teller* mines and roadblocks, which gave hint that the enemy was moving back to consolidate his lines. That was exactly what was happening.

Opposition stiffened on Friday, August 4th, as VII Corps changed its direction of advance. While Hill 273 was captured easily by the *Raiders,* Hill 280 was held with typical Nazi fanaticism and many casualties were sustained in gaining this height. Next day, the regiment pushed slowly through the hill country around St. Pois, treading lightly across mine fields and receiving an occasional shower of enemy artillery. But the 47th reached its objectives.

It was just as difficult going in the St. Sever Forest, where the 60th C.T. slowly was crunching ahead. Then, on Saturday, the *Go-Devils* attacked from their wooded positions and moved forward rapidly under the enemy's artillery and mortar fire. The drive bogged down at the town of Champ du Boult, where the regiment was blocked by a strong enemy position which had the support of *Mark V* tanks, self-propelled artillery and other arms. After the 1st Battalion was driven from the town by an enemy counterattack, the entire regiment became positioned for an assault during the following morning.

German stubbornness had proved only a temporary setback, and on August 7th steady progress was made in the 60th C.T. zone. The 2nd Battalion passed through the 1st and proceeded through Champ du Boult, while the 3rd jumped off southeast from Les Buttes and battered against mounting opposition to reach L'Aubier. The 2nd Battalion quickly reached the area of La Renadiere, where German opposition became more pronounced, and the battalion was forced to stop and reorganize. At 4 P.M. the 1st Battalion moved on line between the other two *Go-Devil* battalions; and with artillery

HEDGEROW WARFARE

support in abundance, the regiment pushed forward once again.

Meanwhile, the *Raider* 3rd Battalion led its regiment's attack, supported by artillery and supplementary fires from the 1st and 2nd Battalions who themselves moved out later in the day. While the 1st passed through La Goderie, the 2nd rolled through La Tuliere and followed the 1st. A great deal of resistance had developed in the 3rd Battalion zone of advance, and it was necessary to call for another artillery concentration to clear its way. Despite this aid, the unit temporarily remained stopped.

* * * *

AT THE beginning of this drive, the Ninth's commanding general had noticed the difficulty with which the 60th and 47th Infantries were advancing through the rugged hill countryside bounding St. Sever-Calvados. It was apparent that fulfillment by the Division of its part in the VII Corps mission was going to be hard forthcoming unless something were done immediately. That Corps mission, as of August 1st, had been to seize the upper reaches of the River See between the towns of Brecy and Sourdeval, and to establish a bridgehead over the See at Brecy for the Third Army. The latter objective had been accomplished, but the former still was underway.

In order to speed up the drive and realize capture of the Ninth Division's goal, which lay along the heights generally running parallel to the Vire-Sourdeval highway, General Eddy obtained permission of VII Corps to try a daring maneuver. His idea was to send the reserve 39th C.T. on a wide sweeping right hook down south behind the zone of the 3rd Armored Division, through the Brecy bridgehead area, then west until the proximity of Cherence le

Roussel was reached. From this point the 39th was to strike up toward Perriers-en-Beaufice, Gathemo and the heights and roads centers of that vicinity, thus completing an enveloping movement which would relieve the pressure to the front of the Ninth and, as a consequence, force the enemy to fall back.

Despite the fact that this involved several days of movement for the *Falcons,* as well as their passing through the zones of other units, this ambitious scheme was undertaken. Colonel Bond's command was attached to the 1st Infantry Division until the Ninth was able to come abreast of the new line of the 39th—at which time the regiment was to revert to Ninth Division control.

By noon of August 6th, having disposed of stubborn opposition in its drive to the north, and having found the St. Pois-Cherence le Roussel road cleared of the enemy, the 39th C.T. reverted to the control of its parent Division. But the regiment had become so situated as to be wide open against a strong German counterassault from the east, since its right flank was facing toward the direction of the enemy's greatest strength. As the 39th turned eastward to remedy its northward deployment and to take up the hedgerow-to-hedgerow fight, fate intervened to catch the regiment in the course of its pivoting.

* * * *

A MILITARY storm was brewing behind the German lines, where a brief, spirited Nazi counteroffensive was being prepared under the personal directive of Hitler. While *der Fuehrer* plotted the course of retribution and possible victory, the Allies consolidated gains and pushed ever outward from the Normandy Peninsula. The newly-formed Third Army broke through at Avranches and after August 1st was sweeping toward the peninsula province of Brittany. On the flanks of its armored spearheads were the F.F.I. (French Forces of the Interior), who had risen from the underground to smite the hated *Boche*. Together with the men of General Patton, they quickly cleared the rich countryside of its German defenders.

The enemy was definitely out on his feet for the moment, and great masses of his men and materiel were being extricated to the east and northeast to escape entrapment. Every wheeled vehicle which could be seized by the Germans was pressed into service; even wheel-barrows and perambulators found their way into some retreating columns. As always, there was an outside chance that the crafty *Wehrmacht* would prove capable of establishing a new line and counterattacking. But the Allies were advancing with great rapidity so as to halt any such possibility.

Around the 6th, a concerted Allied drive began; its purpose was to trap the enemy in a salient and then close the pocket between the American and British Commonwealth forces. A Nazi leader, General Dittmar, described the actions which followed quite accurately:

"While the German troops on the front sealing off the enemy lodgement area in northern Normandy were still locked in heavy fighting against the British and Canadians, the obvious thing happened. The Americans further to the south, after effecting a breach, swung around with strong forces to the north against the rear of the German front so as to link up via Argentan with the Allies attacking from Caen."

The Germans had been facing the Allies with their battered Seventh Army and units of their Fifteenth Army—which had dribbled down from the Pas-de-Calais area now and again to replenish the dwindling manpower of the Seventh. The fact that the Fifteenth Army still clung to its channel-coast positions gave the Allies a chance to carry out their plan of encirclement with more assurance. When the Allied plan finally went into operation, the Americans were to close the pocket from the west and south, while the British and Canadians were to push ahead from the north and east, meeting each other in the Falaise area.

Allied leaders now could plan their drive on Paris and beyond, but with reservations. The well-stretched supply lines which had developed with the extension of the Third Army into Brittany, offered the enemy an opportunity to sever the Allied lines of communications. German strategists knew that weakness full well, as did their *Fuehrer*. Such an attack was a long-shot chance, although one which appealed to Hitler tremendously.

Over in the land of Nazism, Adolf Hitler—Ger-

CHERENCE LE ROUSSEL: AWAITING THE ENEMY

many's self-appointed military marvel of the age—had watched his forces in Normandy with over-zealousness and disgust. Perhaps the greatest blunder he made was to believe the propaganda regarding his own infallibility as a general. Added to the inherent German methodicalness, which seemed unable to cope with individuality of a foe in combat, this blunder indicated one logical conclusion—defeat in the west.

To Hitler, a successful counter-offensive seemed the lone solution of the problem. It might have been, had he been able to muster sufficient strength for victory, for the idea had some logic. Therefore, early in August, the *Fuehrer* ordered a re-grouping of armored and *S.S.* units into a *Panzer* group—along the lines of the mighty spearheads which had terrified Europe during the old *Blitzkrieg* days. This was the first such organization of the invasion to be formed by the enemy, and had the mission of separating the Third Army from the rest of the Allied forces by knifing through from Mortain to Avranches in an all-out thrust. But lacking the aerial superiority of 1940 and minus adequate first-line reserves, the assault was a gamble of which even the most ardent Nazi leaders were fearful.

If the *Panzer* drive had penetrated as planned—and anything is possible in warfare—the 12th Army Group would have been forced to take heroic measures to rescue its elements south of the break-through. Fortunately, the fanatical endeavor failed and backfired into one of the biggest Allied victories of the war. For several days the results were in doubt, but once again the actions of a few gave victory to many.

* * * *

NEWS of the impending enemy offensive through Sourdeval and Mortain reached the 39th C.T. at 1:30 A.M. on the morning of August 7, 1944. Company *B* had reported a vehicular movement southeast of Cherence le Roussel, and one hour later a platoon of the Ninth Reconnaissance Troop encountered a German armored column while screening forward. The enemy was moving west in the direction of Le Mesnil Tove and into the southern portion of the 1st Battalion zone.

Blitzkrieg had returned momentarily in the form of this powerful counter-offensive, and it struck with an overwhelming force. At 3:12 A.M. the forward switchboard in Le Mesnil Tove rushed out the message that machine-gun fire was falling . . . American troops had left the town. Victorious *Panzers* thrust on; and the 1st and 3rd Battalions lost their field trains and ammunitions dumps in the ensuing melee, as the potent Nazi spearheads overran and set fire to American installations. To make matters worse, the German drive had been pushed directly across the lines of communications which connected the 39th C.P. to its battalions—and these lines were cut.

Mesnil Tove is less than two miles south of Cherence le Roussel—a brisk fifteen minute walk. Thus when first word of the impending offensive drifted to the forces around Le Roussel, certain precautions were taken. Just prior to three o'clock, the 2nd Battalion had been ordered to move its anti-tank protection to the rear. After the trouble at Mesnil Tove, the 3rd rushed its reserve Company *K* and some tank destroyers along the road from Cherence le Roussel to the breakthrough sector. Meanwhile, the *Falcons* advised the nearby 30th Division of the situation, and the 30th moved one battalion on Juvigny-le-Tertre with an ultimate aim of pivoting north on the road leading from Juvigny to Le Mesnil Tove.

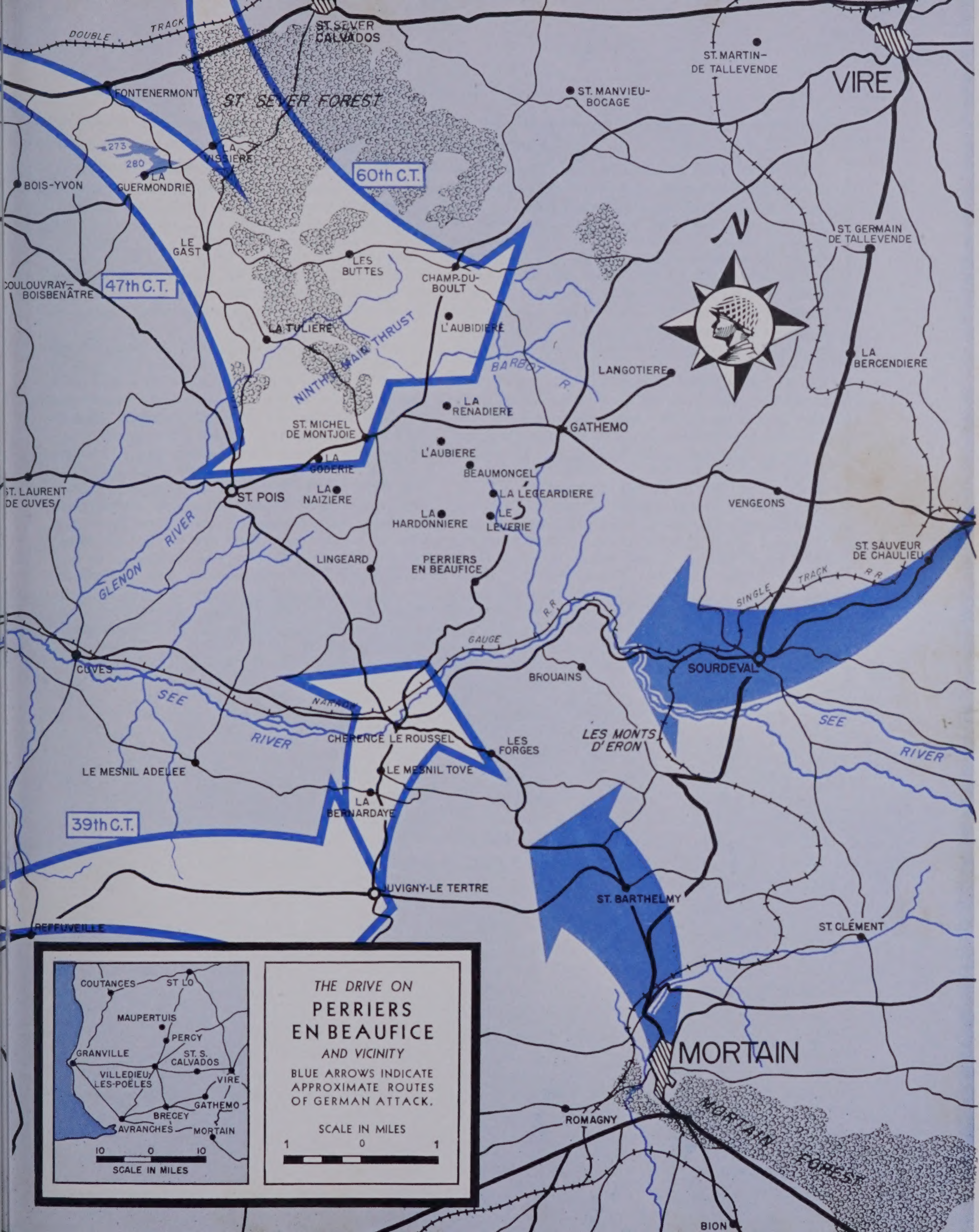
The situation was fairly desperate on August 7th and the enemy knew it. Mortain had been recaptured by the German, and more reverses were in store for the VII Corps troops holding out against the *Panzer* advance. What gave the fanatical *S.S.* units more incentive was the fact that they could view Avranches—their final goal—from the hills west of Mortain.

Some American units had to abandon their advance positions and pull back. A platoon of the 39th Cannon Company was just north of the main *Panzer* route of attack and was forced to render its weapons and vehicles unusable. But even in withdrawal American ingenuity was at work. While the cannoneers escaped north, their platoon leader stayed behind—to listen and to observe. In all, 55 enemy vehicles were reported from this location.

By now the fast rolling counter-offensive had penetrated far into the American lines, cutting the 39th C.T. into two main segments: the infantry battalions were to the north of this line, and a composite force of the regimental headquarters, cannon company, anti-tank company and the 26th Field Artillery were to the south. Colonel Bond gathered a small, makeshift force from this headquarters group and sent it into position to block any further penetration south of the La Bernardaye crossroads (south of the Mesnil Tove breach). In the course of events that followed, the 26th Artillery (Lt. Colonel Justin W. Stoll) performed magnificently in holding its positions—some of which were only 500 yards from the enemy—and continuing to fire into the southern flank of the German penetration.

By 5 A.M. enemy spearheads had reached the 30th Division roadblocks before Le Mesnil-Adelee, and were reported turning south. At 6 A.M. the 1st Battalion was waging a stiff battle for Cherence le Roussel . . . fighting the enemy to its front and right flank. Two hours later, the 2nd threw back a strong German counterassault. Throughout the remainder of the day, the enemy continued to counterattack. But his drives had lost their original momentum against a reformed American stonewall, as the might of the entire 4th Division Artillery and planes of the AAF bolstered the stubborn *AAA-O* men. That evening the 39th C.T. became attached to the 4th Infantry Division; and by now the line had become fairly stabilized—although *Panzer Group West* continued to constitute a grave threat.

Evening intelligence reports, emanating from pris-


THE DRIVE ON
PERRIERS
EN BEAUFICE
AND VICINITY

BLUE ARROWS INDICATE APPROXIMATE ROUTES OF GERMAN ATTACK.

SCALE IN MILES
1
0
1
DOUBLE TRACK
ST. SEVER CALVADOS
FONTENERMONT
ST. SEVER FOREST
ST. MARTIN-DE TALLEVENDE
ST. MANVIEU-BOCAGE
VIRE
273
280
LA VISSIERE
LA GUERMONDRIE
BOIS-YVON
60th C.T.
LE GAST
LES BUTTES
CHAMP-DU-BOULT
ST. GERMAIN DE TALLEVENDE
COULOUVRAY-BOISBENÂTRE
47th C.T.
L'AUBIDIERE
LA TULIERE
NINTH'S MAIN THRUST
BARBOT R.
LANGOTIERE
LA BERCENDIERE
LA RENADIERE
ST. MICHEL DE MONTJOIE
GATHEMO
L'AUBIERE
LA GODERIE
BEAUMONCEL
ST. LAURENT DE CUVES
ST. POIS
LA NAIZIERE
LA LEGEARDIERE
VENGEONS
LA HARDONNIERE
LE LEVERIE
GLENON RIVER
LINGEARD
PERRIERS EN BEAUFICE
ST. SAUVEUR DE CHAULIEU
SINGLE TRACK R.R.
R.R.
GAUGE
SOURDEVAL
CUVES
BROUAINS
SEE RIVER
NARHON
CHERENCE LE ROUSSEL
LES FORGES
LES MONTS D'ERON
SEE RIVER
LE MESNIL ADELEE
LE MESNIL TOVE
LA BERNARDAYE
39th C.T.
JUVIGNY-LE TERTRE
ST. BARTHELMY
REFFUVEILLE
ST. CLÉMENT
MORTAIN
ROMAGNY
MORTAIN FOREST
BION
COUTANCES
ST LO
MAUPERTUIS
PERCY
GRANVILLE
ST. S. CALVADOS
VILLEDIEU LES-POELES
VIRE
GATHEMO
BRECEY
AVRANCHES
MORTAIN
10
0
10
SCALE IN MILES

Distinguished Unit Citation

The *1st Battalion, 39th Infantry,* is cited for extraordinary heroism in action during the period 6-9 August 1944 in the vicinity of Cherence le Roussel, France. For a period of 4 days the battalion fought off a series of fanatical German counterattacks designed to breakthrough to Avranches and cut the American supply lines and isolate the Allied break-through from the Cotentin Peninsula. Jumping off early on the morning of 6 August 1944 the battalion forced its way forward under increasing enemy resistance to occupy the high ground northeast of Cherence le Roussel and block all the roads leading to Avranches. Fighting forward under intense tank and self-propelled artillery fire the battalion neared its objective when the enemy launched a fierce and determined counterattack. This attack estimated to be four reinforced companies, was beaten off by the maximum use of the bazooka teams, mortars, artillery, and all available weapons combined with the eager and bold aggressiveness of the troops. After repulsing this attack the battalion quickly pushed forward, established roadblocks and dug in for the night. Again at about 0300 hours, 7 August, 1944, the enemy launched another counterattack preceded by an intense artillery barrage supported by at least a company of tanks. This numerically superior force was beaten off by sheer, dogged determination and courage on the part of every individual, inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy in bitter hand-to-hand fighting. Once the Battalion Headquarters Company was deployed to repulse a threat coming around the battalion's right flank. Despite dangerous enemy thrusts and heavy fire the enemy attack was repulsed. The enemy increased the artillery tempo and at about 2240 hours attempted another break-through along the entire front, only to be thrown back by the intense fire and a determined battalion. At about 1025 hours, 8 August 1944, the battalion repelled an infantry and tank attack to the left flank and at about 1833 hours beat off another thrust aimed at the right flank, pushing the enemy back beyond the Mortain-Avranches road. Following almost continuous self-propelled, tank, and rocket fire, the enemy launched a renewed attack, hitting the positions of Company A and Company C at about 0315 hours and Company B at about 0707 hours. A fierce and bitter battle raged until about 1000 hours with the fanatical enemy throwing in everything they had left in an effort to break through. Refusing to give ground or be demoralized by direct tank fire, the battalion made a heroic stand, using all weapons, including hand grenades, which were hurled against the tank tracks. Even though threatened to be surrounded the battalion again courageously engaged the enemy in hand-to-hand combat and drove them back. During this action at least ten enemy tanks were knocked out, several prisoners captured, and heavy losses inflicted on the personnel, while the battalion casualties were comparatively low. The dauntless stand of this battalion against a series of relentless and fanatical counterattacks exemplified the gallantry, aggressiveness and unflagging devotion to duty of each member of the *1st Battalion, 39th Infantry* and was an inspiring example of the honored ideals of the military service.

oner interrogation, gave mention of the fact that of the 70 *Panzer* tanks attacking toward Avranches through that sector, only 30 were operative by nightfall. Some of Germany's best *S.S.* divisions had been delayed, if not stopped. Nonetheless, enemy counterattacks and infiltrations continued—for Avranches lay fifteen miles beyond.

Throughout the following day, the Germans carried on their sledge-hammer type of drive against the 39th, trying to drive north from Le Mesnil Tove to Cherence le Roussel—and time and time again they were stopped and pushed back. By nightfall the tables had turned. An American counterattack had carried through Mesnil Tove and was shoving the fanatical enemy east. Although the situation was still serious on August 9th, it was no longer in doubt and the 39th C.T. reverted to Ninth Division control at noon—thoroughly worthy of its *AAA-O* motto.

* * * *

WHILE the *Falcons* were engaged in their stand against the *Panzer* counter-offensive, the remainder of the Ninth Division had been busy, too. During the 8th, the Ninth was in the midst of a fierce attack designed to eliminate the German pocket of penetration. Typical Nazi stubbornness blocked each attempt of the 47th Infantry to advance, and strong defensive fires rained down from enemy artillery, mortar and machine-gun positions—which presaged a day of hard fighting for the *Raider* 1st and 2nd Battalions. The *Go-Devils* were more fortunate during the opening stages of their drive, pushing steadily east against the enemy on the heights. Before long, the 60th was faced with an impasse as well . . . for the Germans were in possession of the commanding ground.

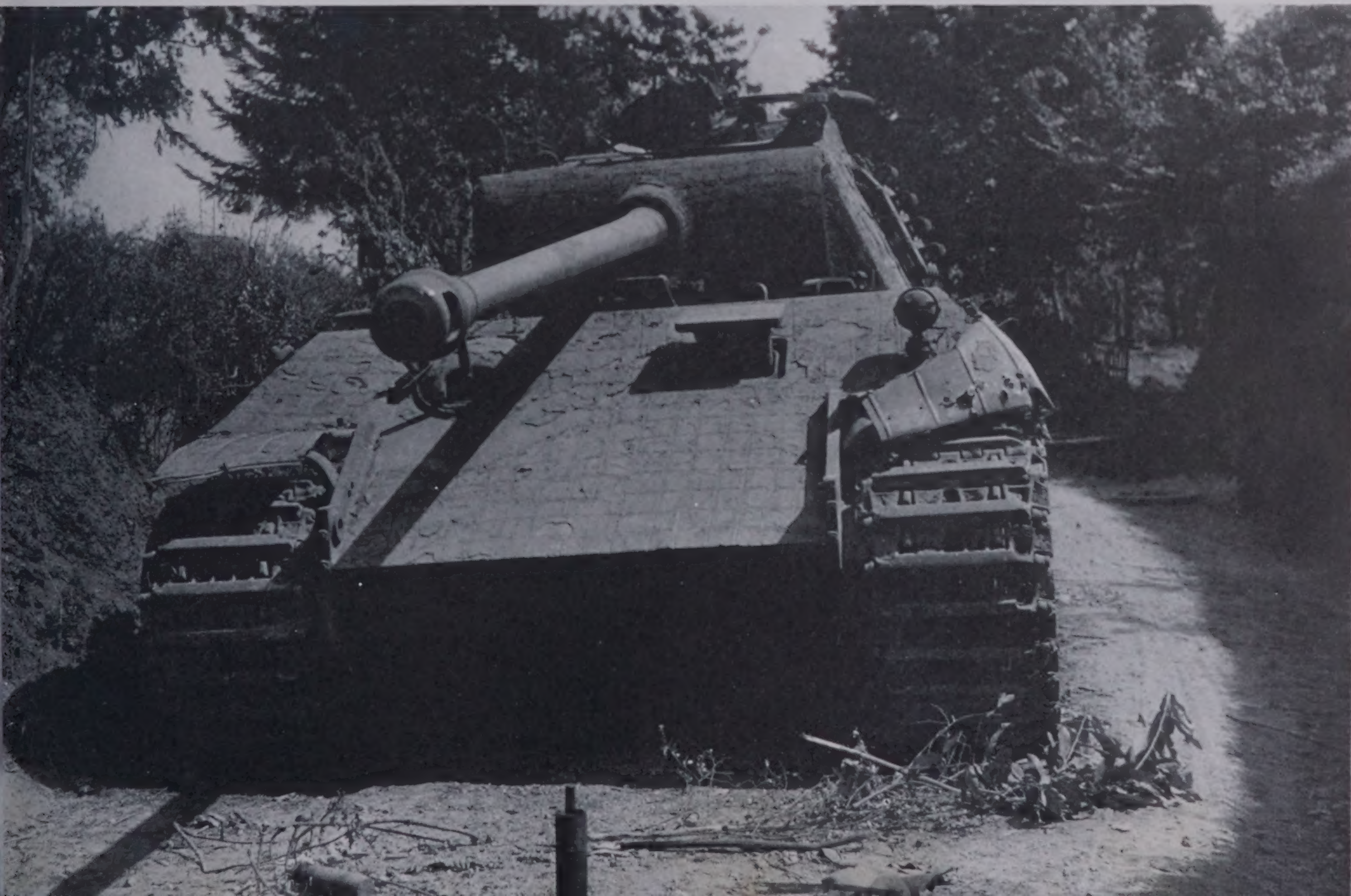
It seemed like the repetition of an old tale, the enemy was holding the heights. He looked down upon the 47th and 60th Infantries from a piece of high ground between them; he was holding a ridgeline which viewed the positions of the 39th. Early on the 9th, the 47th and 60th launched a coordinated attack to destroy the pocket of resistance on the heights between their flanks. The *Go-Devils* worked their way south toward La Hardonniere, but were met by heavy automatic weapons fire which kept both the 2nd and 1st Battalions from making any great gains.

Colonel Smythe's *Raiders* also were receiving a great deal of trouble from this strongpoint. The 47th's 1st Battalion drove to the left, while the 2nd moved on the town of Perriers-en-Beaufice with the mission of severing the road which ran northeast from that town to Gathemo. But the heights remained in German hands. Heavy, accurate fire pummeled the men of the 1st from the high ground, and the 2nd was unable to make much headway. Its Company *E,* however, managed to move along the low ground beyond Perriers-en-Beaufice and contact the 39th C.T.

As dawn broke on the morning of Thursday, August 10th, the Germans remained in control of the high ground between the *Raiders* and *Go-Devils.* Division strategy called for use of the 47th's 3rd Battalion as additional strength in clearing this thorn in the Ninth's line. Smashing through with the *Go-Devil* 2nd Battalion as its partner of the attack, the 3rd drove south and east through the lower end of the 60th sector and headed for the high ground south of La Legeardiere. By skillful maneuvering, the *Raider* battalion battered forward against determined defenses to reach its objective by dark.

Just after noon, the 47th's 2nd Battalion jumped off for Perriers-en-Beaufice and the hilly terrain

ENEMY ARMOR AGAIN LITTERED ROADS



PERRIERS-EN-BEAUFICE: RESPITE AND HOT CHOW

to the east . . . the area which had proved so hard to capture on the 9th. For the first 500 yards there was not too much opposition, but each foot of ground advanced beyond that point was contested bitterly by the enemy and the battalion was stopped again.

It was not until August 11th that this town and the high ground it occupied were captured. During early morning the *Raider* 2nd Battalion, following an air strike, entered Perriers-en-Beaufice. By 9 A.M. that key town was taken and the battalion moved across the heights north of Beaufice, patrolling as far as the streamline east of the town and north along the road to Gathemo. By now the enemy was withdrawing along the entire front, and eventually the *Raiders* made contact with the 109th Infantry and elements of the 113th Cavalry. Pugnacious to the end, the retreating Germans employed a rear guard which remained quite active, and the 47th's 1st Battalion soon came under automatic weapons and mortar fire to the south.

Other Ninth Division units were equally successful. In the 39th C.T. zone, the *Falcon* 1st Battalion moved forward 700 yards to occupy the much sought ridgeline to its front. And by now the 60th's leading battalions had been *pinched out* by the 109th Infantry. It was at this time that *The Chase* began in earnest. Mortain-Cherence Le Roussel gave way to the Falaise-Argentan pocket . . . and to a death knoll for the once-superb German Seventh Army and the newly formed Fifth *Panzer* Army, which had assumed the sector of *Panzer Group West*. For the next few days, all that remained for the Ninth was patrolling and consolidation of high ground.

The frontline chaplains of the Ninth Division took their chances along with the infantry. On August 11th, 1st Lt. (Chaplain) Irving Tepper of the 60th Infantry was fatally wounded by twenty-two *pieces of shrapnel. Tepper was no ordinary man. It was he who had been credited with building the first American cemetery in French Morocco, and with conducting the first burial services at Port Lyautey. Famous for his sex lectures (a must for Army chaplains) and for his unselfish help to men of all religions, Chaplain Tepper once refused a corps-level job to remain with the 2nd Battalion. After fighting off death for two days, the gallant little man died—to be remembered in death as he was in life, "Tepper was always up front . . ."*

* * * *

BY AUGUST 13th the enemy had become trapped in what was to be known later as the Falaise Gap. He had held the ground gained at Mortain too long, and now the entire German Seventh Army and its armored support was becoming enmeshed within the powerful jaws of an Allied trap. With the Canadians and British pushing down from the north and east on Falaise, the Americans drove up from the south and west, using Argentan as the extreme right pincer of their sweep. The gradually narrowing enemy escape exit lay through Falaise and Trun, and here the greatest pressure was exerted—particularly from the air.

VII Corps became alerted for its part in closing the pocket, and the Ninth Division was ordered immediately to a new assembly area, whence the men of the *Octofoil* could enter into the piecemeal destruction of the encircled Seventh Army. The Division completed a fast 50-mile journey over good roads and joined the 1st Infantry Division and the 3rd Armored in their attack north.

Initially, the 60th C.T. was attached to the 3rd Armored Division, and the Ninth received in exchange a temporary attachment of the Provisional Ranger Group. The *Go-Devil* 3rd Battalion moved out at 10 A.M. on August 13th with the mission of guarding the Pre-en-Pail road center, and the remainder of the 60th entered an assembly area around La Crouliere during the afternoon. During the following day, the 60th C.T. relieved elements

BAZOOKA CREW SPOTS GERMAN TANK

of the 3rd Armored at St. Patrice-du-Desert and Joue-du-Bois. By nightfall the regiment had taken its objectives and the 60th, less its 3rd Battalion, reverted to Ninth Division control.

Everywhere within the gap, the enemy was waging a stiff battle. Nazi diehards—the *S.S.* and the *Panzers*—were attempting to extricate themselves from the trap, and assigned the task of covering their withdrawal to the German infantry. A steadily tightening noose of artillery was closing in on the foe, and Allied aircraft flew thousands of sorties to disrupt and destroy his vehicles. The roads became clogged with German wreckage, and Hitler's *supermen* took to the fields and woods in their retreat. It was turnabout for the fall of France, Dunkirk and Kasserine!

Throughout the 14th the Ninth Division pushed north, sweeping forward strongly from the hillside town of Javron. The 39th moved by motor at 4:20 P.M. to an area southeast of Couptrain, and then drove ahead through Motte Forest to advance to a wooded ridgeline south of St. Patrice-du-Desert. *Raider* spearheads pushed out from the Javron area and advanced along the right flank of the 39th, to the high ground near Orgeres-le-Roche. That night the Provisional Rangers were detached from the Ninth and the narrowing encirclement continued.

On August 15th the Division continued to advance north, helping close the pocket. The 39th Infantry met no resistance until 6 P.M., when light rifle fire from the front and direction of Beauvain, and tanks on the right flank opened up. Without hesitation the regiment's leading battalions continued to advance; the 2nd reached a branch of the Ferte streamline (west of Beauvain) and the 3rd pushed out 1,600 yards.

In the 47th sector, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, with strong motor patrols to their front progressed north against "scattered resistance." Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion entrucked to crush the enemy at Beauvain. As night fell, the north and east sections of that town were secured. By eight the following morning, Beauvain had succumbed to the *Raiders;* then the 1st motored to an area south of Faverolles. And the advance rolled on!

The 2nd Battalion had pushed about 2,500 yards northeast of La Ferte-Mace during August 15th, and the 3rd Battalion was about 500 yards to its rear. Continuing this drive on the 16th, the 2nd followed spearheading tanks of the 3rd Armored against stiff opposition to the village of Annebecq. Victory here was followed by further gains through very stubborn defenses beyond Annebecq. The *Raider* 3rd Battalion followed by motor movement, detrucked, and then jumped off toward Faverolles behind armor. Faverolles was full of enemy rear guard forces, who held out with tanks, self-propelled artillery and infantry weapons. Waging a tenacious and costly battle, the Americans drove the Germans from the town and the 3rd Battalion now advanced alongside the 1st.

Other portions of the Ninth Division line had pushed forward as well. The 39th C.T. advanced far to the north, overcoming all resistance and stopping for the night along a two-kilometer front, north of Le Bois Jean. Meanwhile, a combat patrol from the 60th's 1st Battalion probed northeast to Le Champ-de-la-Pierre and northwest to Bois-du-Mont, destroying one enemy tank and capturing ten prisoners.

Guiding its left flank almost parallel to the La Ferte-Mace—Briouze highway, the Ninth swept north toward the Briouze-Argentan road. On the 17th the Division's attack was met by scattered delaying forces, which counterattacked to keep the rapidly shrinking gap from closing. Small arms, mortars, tanks and long range heavy artillery backed the German desire to block the Ninth; but these weapons were to become just so much booty for the Allies. Despite fierce counterattacks and a display of inch-contesting hostility, the inevitable American advance continued. By nightfall, the 39th was holding a line which stretched from a point one mile south of the key town of Briouze to the outskirts of St. Hilaire-de-Briouze (a village approximately two miles east); the 47th had reached the east-west highway from Argentan, aided by the 746th Tank Battalion.

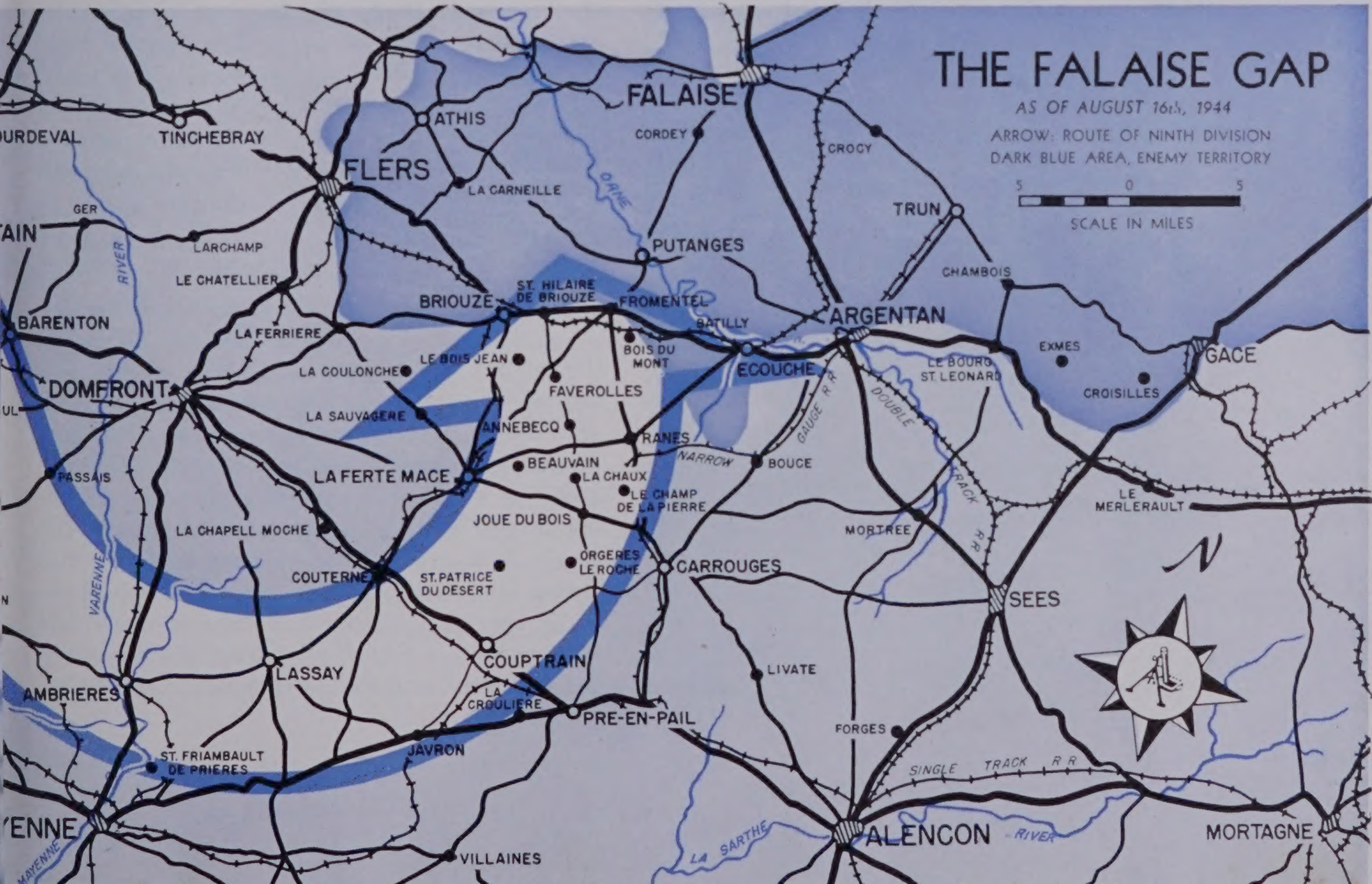
It was now that the British Second Army passed across the Division front, signifying that the enemy had been pinched from the area. Reconnaissance patrols of the 39th C.T. contacted the British in Briouze at 9:48 during the morning of the 18th, thus ending the fighting in that region.

* * * *

AS IF the enemy had not received enough punishment; the United States Seventh Army, under Lt. General A. M. Patch (former 47th Infantry commander) launched a successful invasion of Southern France during August 15th, and was now pushing through the weak defenses of the German Nineteenth Army. The Seventh made lightning gains north, aided by the F.F.I. Almost simultaneously, units of the Third Army were pivoting north and east to coordinate with this new threat against the enemy in France.

Wehrmacht strategy had been for their Seventh and Fifteenth Armies to halt any advances north by establishing a defensive line along the Seine. For this purpose, an ingenious array of barges, ferries, floating bridges and small craft had been hidden along the river banks . . . ready to implement a German *Dunkirk*. However, the overwhelming defeat of his forces everywhere had forced the enemy to lose some of the methodical efficiency he usually displayed. Helter-skelter, unit after unit disintegrated into bands of individuals, each man bent upon gaining the protection of the river—and some degree of safety.

By August 17th the Third Army had captured or blocked the last main escape routes to Paris, and the French *Maquis* had risen to the strength of an army—ready to finish off the German invaders between the U.S. Third and Seventh Armies. In the famous tradition of their fathers, underground elements in Paris began to fight for liberation of


THE FALAISE GAP
AS OF AUGUST 16th, 1944
ARROW: ROUTE OF NINTH DIVISION
DARK BLUE AREA, ENEMY TERRITORY
5
0
5
SCALE IN MILES
N
FALAISE
ATHIS
CORDEY
CROCY
URDEVAL
TINCHEBRAY
FLERS
LA CARNEILLE
ORNE
TRUN
GER
AIN
LARCHAMP
RIVER
PUTANGES
CHAMBOIS
LE CHATELLIER
ST. HILAIRE DE BRIOUZE
BRIOUZE
FROMENTEL
BATILLY
ARGENTAN
BARENTON
LA FERRIERE
BOIS DU MONT
EXMES
GACE
LE BOIS JEAN
LA COULONCHE
ECOUCHE
LE BOURG ST. LEONARD
DOMFRONT
FAVEROLLES
CROISILLES
DOUBLE
GAUGE R.R.
LA SAUVAGERE
ANNEBECQ
RANES
NARROW
BOUCE
TRACK
PASSAIS
LA FERTE MACE
BEAUVAIN
LA CHAUX
LE CHAMP DE LA PIERRE
LE MERLERAULT
R.R.
JOUE DU BOIS
LA CHAPELL MOCHE
MORTREE
VARENNE
ORGERES LE ROCHE
COUTERNE
ST. PATRICE DU DESERT
CARROUGES
SEES
COUPTRAIN
LASSAY
LIVATE
AMBRIERES
LA CROULIERE
PRE-EN-PAIL
FORGES
ST. FRIAMBAULT DE PRIERES
JAVRON
SINGLE TRACK R.R.
ENNE
MAYENNE
LA SARTHE
ALENCON
RIVER
MORTAGNE
VILLAINES

France's queen city . . . erecting street barricades and sniping from buildings.

Of the Falaise Gap area, General Eisenhower had this to say in his report after the war:

> *Back inside the pocket, the confusion was still greater, and the destruction assumed immense proportions as our aircraft and artillery combined in pounding the trapped Germans. Allied guns ringed the ever-shrinking "killing-ground," and while the S.S. elements as usual fought to annihilation, the ordinary German infantry gave themselves up in ever-increasing numbers. By 20 August the gap was finally closed near Chambois, and by 22 August the pocket was eliminated. The lovely, wooded countryside west of Argentan had become the graveyard of the army which, three months earlier, had confidently waited to smash the Allied invasion on the Normandy beaches. What was left of the Seventh and Fifth Panzer Armies was in headlong flight toward the Seine, and a further stand west of the river was impossible.*

THE EVER-PRESENT M.P.

LE GAZ
BUTANE
TOWN
OFF LIMITS
TROOPS

While most of the infantry of the German armies trapped at Falaise was now captured or destroyed, remnants of many *S.S. Panzer* divisions had escaped the pocket to fight another day. Already, the hastily organized German divisions north of the Seine River were being organized into a reconstituted enemy Seventh Army—although this command would be unable to do little else but slowly retreat upon the *Siegfried Line.*

It was a far cry from tortuous defense of Thala, the Battle of Britain and the evacuation at Dunkirk. Mighty strides had been taken since the race for Tunisia, which was won by the enemy in January of 1943. Russia had asked for a diversion that would occupy 60 divisions—the Allies had destroyed the equivalent of 40 by late August, and scores more were fated to become engaged in the battle for western Germany. In the air, the western Allies virtually had destroyed the *Luftwaffe's* offensive capacity; strategic bombing had rendered the heart of the *Fatherland* a mass of smoking wreckage. And although the Russian armies were winning back the last acre of occupied Soviet soil, it was the AAF and RAF which gave them the destruction by air to their front.

* * * *

PERHAPS many old-timers of the Ninth Division pondered the changing tide on August 19th, while the Division was enjoying a short rest and recuperative period in reserve. The ranks were ever-changing throughout the Ninth, and new faces continued to replace those who had fought in North Africa, Sicily . . . even against the hills of yesterday. Leaders as well as frontline doughboys had their fair share of these new faces. Colonel de Rohan had turned over the *reins* of the 60th to Colonel Jesse L. Gibney, Lt. Colonel *Black Mike* Kauffman had been seriously wounded, Lt. Colonel Woodrow Wilson Bailey had died from wounds received in action, General Stroh had left for a higher command and thousands of other changes had taken place. There would be some who would go all the way to the end, like the inspiring Lieutenant (Lt. Colonel) Quentin R. *Hardtack* Hardage, holder of the *Purple Heart* with *Twelve Clusters,* and the 39th Infantry's Colonel Bond. Death took little holiday on the line—within the infantry platoons there were to be several complete turnovers of personnel.

Yes, there were many changes which had altered the rosters of the Ninth . . . more would follow, many more. Probably the greatest change to occur was that of Division commanders. In this rest area, General Eddy, the Ninth's excellent leader was promoted to command the XII Corps of the Third Army, in recognition of his outstanding mentoring of the Ninth Division.

As General Eddy left he took with him his enlisted *staff:* Sergeant Alberto Lozano, his trusted orderly and friend: Sergeant Barnhult, his chauffeur; Sergeant Wooten, his secretary; and his two able bodyguards, Sergeants Detronsky and Perry (the latter of whom was killed in action while accompanying the general on a frontline trip in the XII Corps). But General Eddy also carried with him the memories of two and a half years with the Division; and although he went on to outmaneuver Von Rundstedt at the Moselle and to new laurels, he never forgot the Ninth. Similarly, the Ninth remembered the husky Chicagoan, who preferred winning by sweat and maneuver rather than by bloodshed . . . who hated war and its aftermath.

In the choice of a successor to General Eddy, the Ninth was extremely fortunate. Its new commander was Major General Louis A. Craig—sincere, religious, a good listener, smaller than his predecessor but every inch a fighting leader. During World War I he had fought in the Veste, Aisne-Marne, Meuse-Argonne and Toul Sector campaigns; in the course of the current war, he had commanded the 97th Infantry Division and the XXIII Corps. Son of an Army officer, brother of General Malin Craig (former U.S. Army Chief of Staff), with two sons in the service, the Ninth's new chief was an ingrained Army booster. But General Craig was not a *boaster.* He was not prone to publicity for himself, preferring to give all credit for battle success to the men he led—perhaps to excess, for the General was a tactical wizard in Belgium and Germany.

GENERAL CRAIG

Typical of General Craig's character and his desire to fare no better than his subordinates was his refusal to wear a general's small .38 caliber pistol, carrying the heavier government issue *45* instead.

* * * *

WITH the rapidly mounting chaos of defeat and encirclement plaguing the German armies in France, boundary lines between Allied units changed rapidly . . . as often as the enemy gave up or fled. On August 20th, the Ninth Division had been ordered to occupy an area between the road-center towns of Sees and Verneuil, so as to protect the left flank of First Army and prevent any movement of the Germans to the south. Covering this thirty-mile boundary between the American First Army

After August 22nd, the story of the Ninth Division's advance to the German border is greatly intertwined with those of the other VII Corps units: the 1st Infantry Division, the 3rd Armored Division and the swift 4th Cavalry Group. Aboard tanks of the 3rd Armored, the infantry proved the logic of the reasoning behind the tank-infantry team idea. Moreover, these three divisions worked together just as closely as did any three battalions of a regiment. Their speed, cunning and tenacious advance bewildered countless Germans into surrendering and completely upset the enemy timetable for manning the *Siegfried Line*. This was the accurately named *First Team of the First Army*, the VII Corps of General Collins —as fine a group of men as ever went to war.

and the British Second Army meant patrolling a hilly and wooded region, with Mortagne as the center of operations.

For several days the Ninth and its attached 4th Cavalry Group screened the area, thoroughly reconnoitering as far forward as the Risle River and the Laigle-Verneuil road. By the 22nd a steady stream of British troops was passing in front of the Ninth; and on the following day the Division prepared to move toward the vicinity of wooded La Ferte-Vidame, a small town nine miles south of Verneuil. At least the Division would move when trucks became available—for this was the beginning of the race across France, an overwhelming motorized sweep which surprised even the Americans.

Early on the morning of August 24th the Ninth rolled into La Ferte-Vidame, where a short rest was followed with a continuation of the motor journey to the vicinity of Arpajon (halfway between Paris and Etampes). Here the smiling French still were reveling in the joyous liberation—and everywhere was the happy feeling which Americans experience on New Year's Eve or Thanksgiving. The people of Normandy had resented somewhat the battles which destroyed their villages and killed their animals—they had fared fairly well during the occupation. But the suburban areas around Paris had known the privations and humiliations of Nazi invasion . . . and their ingrained hatred of collaborationists was more pronounced, perhaps, than that of other regions where the Division had fought or traveled.

While the Ninth had been trucking forward the 3rd Armored had roared on to the Seine. After the 3rd Armored crossed the Seine at Tilly, the 47th C.T. provided one battalion to aid the tankers in clearing out the wooded area near Epinay Sous-Senart. Now temporary bridges could span the river, enabling the entire Ninth Division to cross.

VII Corps plans called for the 3rd Armored Division to precede the Ninth and 1st Infantry Divisions in a northeasterly attack. But first the river had to be crossed, and by August 26th, the 60th and 39th Combat Teams had assembled near Melun and the 47th near Tilly—in preparation to jumping off for the far shore. However, these preparations were obscured by some very exciting news of the moment.

Paris was liberated! If anything magnificent had been said of the *Maquis;* if anything brave had been credited to the underground of France; if anything courageous had been written of the French dying with their scuttled fleet at Toulon—it was now obscured. Paris, the gem of France was free, and her citizens had been part and parcel of that victory. They had died and bled and killed for their freedom . . . and with the aid of the American V Corps had repossessed their beautiful city.

Paris was wild with joy; and hundreds of Americans became *lost* within the city for several days, receiving the lavish hospitality of a people who had lived in fear under the heel of Nazi conquerors for four long years. Now the occupation was *finis;* the capital had been liberated. The lid was off and Parisians poured out the happiness within their hearts!

Further southeast along the Seine, the citizens of Melun were celebrating their freedom on a smaller, but equally happy scale. The atmosphere was a bit different from that of Paris, and well it should be. This was the countryside, and Melun was only a suburban town near the French capital. Yet here was Northern France at its best . . . the sidewalk cafes, the *Cognac, Calvados* (the apple-jack of Normandy), *Vin Blanc, Vin Rouge, Aperitifs* and captured stock which had been bottled especially for the *Wehrmacht*. The *mesdemoiselles* were particularly friendly, and the natives were glad to assist the Americans—for they had lost sons, brothers, husbands, fathers and sweethearts, both in battle and to the German enforced labor camps.

Melun and Arpajon were almost as close as many Ninthmen would ever get to Paris. It just was not in the cards for the Ninth Division to linger long near large cities, either at home or abroad. The open countryside, the dirty little villages and hamlets, the woods and the ever-changing terrain—these were for the Ninth. Others would enjoy the temporary spotlight of parading through conquered cities. For the *Octofoil-wearers* it was a few girls, some wine, some thankful cheers and perhaps the produce of a nearby farm, converted into something palatable . . . then on again through more small communities.

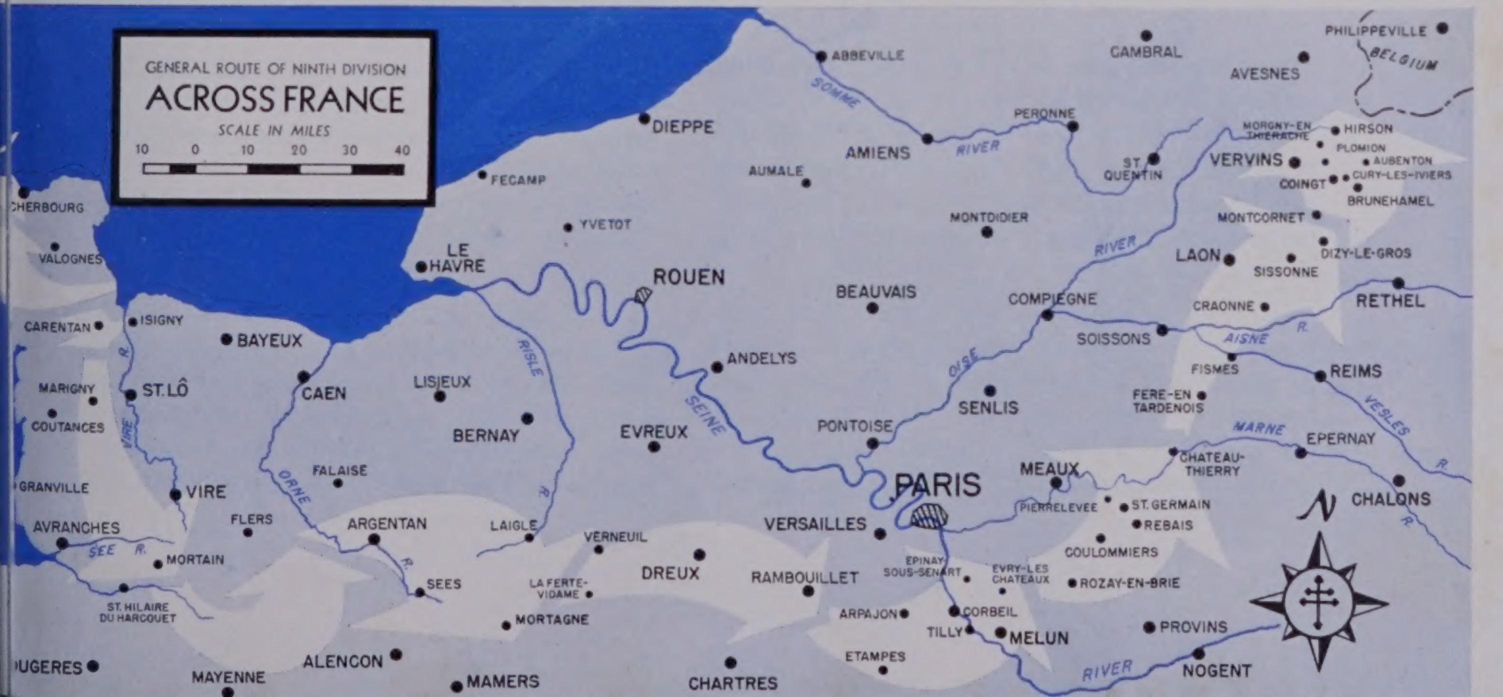
* * * *

CROSSING the Seine on Sunday, August 27, 1944, was uneventful. Pontoon bridges had been constructed to the north shore, since the Germans had blown all permanent structures over the river. At 6 A.M. the Ninth Recon Troop led the Division across, rolling over the pontoons near Tilly; shortly afterward the 47th Regiment followed. Meanwhile, the 39th had negotiated the span at Melun around 7:42 A.M., and the 60th began crossing at noon.

During the next few days it seemed as if the entire German war effort had collapsed. At least it did in the path of VII Corps. Resistance was scattered, and while stubborn in some areas, it stemmed from a few fanatics who were acting upon their own. Throughout the advance north, the 4th Cavalry Group screened the Corps flanks while the 3rd Armored spearheaded forward, by-passing and leaving pockets of Germans to be dealt with by the infantry. One of these pockets was to the north of the Seine—in the form of small delaying groups using machine guns and anti-tank weapons. The *Raiders* cleaned out this rear guard in the woods north of Evry Les Chateau, capturing 233 prisoners, and the drive rolled northward—beyond Verneuil, Rozay-en-Brie and Coulommiers, toward the Marne River.

> *At the end of August 1918, the 47th Infantry battled over the Vesles River in a bloody crossing. Twenty-six years and one day later, the regiment crossed the same river without opposition, at the same spot, passing a monument to their exploits of World War I.*

The enemy was in headlong retreat and the speedy American advance kept nipping at his heels. August 28th found the Ninth crossing the historic Marne and pushing north by nightfall to a line which ran through Pierrelevee-St. Germain-Rebais.


GENERAL ROUTE OF NINTH DIVISION
ACROSS FRANCE
SCALE IN MILES
10 0 10 20 30 40
HERBOURG
VALOGNES
CARENTAN
ISIGNY
BAYEUX
MARIGNY
ST. LÔ
COUTANCES
VIRE R.
GRANVILLE
VIRE
AVRANCHES
SEE R.
MORTAIN
ST. HILAIRE DU HARCOUET
UGERES
MAYENNE
ALENCON
FLERS
FALAISE
CAEN
ORNE
ARGENTAN
R.
SEES
LISIEUX
BERNAY
LAIGLE
R.
RISLE
MORTAGNE
MAMERS
LA FERTE-VIDAME
VERNEUIL
DREUX
EVREUX
LE HAVRE
FECAMP
YVETOT
DIEPPE
ROUEN
ANDELYS
SEINE
CHARTRES
RAMBOUILLET
VERSAILLES
PONTOISE
PARIS
EPINAY-SOUS-SENART
EVRY-LES CHATEAUX
ARPAJON
CORBEIL
TILLY
MELUN
ETAMPES
RIVER
NOGENT
PROVINS
ROZAY-EN-BRIE
COULOMMIERS
REBAIS
ST. GERMAIN
PIERRELEVEE
MEAUX
CHATEAU-THIERRY
MARNE
EPERNAY
CHALONS
R.
R.
VESLES
REIMS
FISMES
FERE-EN TARDENOIS
AISNE
R.
SOISSONS
CRAONNE
RETHEL
SENLIS
OISE
BEAUVAIS
COMPIEGNE
RIVER
LAON
SISSONNE
DIZY-LE-GROS
MONTCORNET
BRUNEHAMEL
COINGT
CURY-LES-IVIERS
AUBENTON
PLOMION
HIRSON
MORGNY-EN THIERACHE
VERVINS
ST QUENTIN
MONTDIDIER
AMIENS
RIVER
SOMME
PERONNE
AUMALE
ABBEVILLE
CAMBRAL
AVESNES
PHILIPPEVILLE
BELGIUM
N

MONUMENT BY THE VESLES

Throughout the day, infantrymen had been riding on tanks and tank destroyers, as well as on trucks. This was a far cry from the battles in Normandy's hedgerow country, where 300 yards sometimes constituted a day's gain. Now, only small rear guard forces met the forward elements, and these easily were taken in stride.

Germans did not bother to man many of the fortifications they had spent years in preparing. Many enemy soldiers tried to reach the rear and found themselves trapped within the American lines. In one case, three trainloads of greatly surprised rear echelon troops were captured by VII Corps troops.

And on ground the *rat race*. The Ninth reached ancient Chateau-Thierry and famed Belleau Woods on the 29th. Here many of the older natives well remembered the Americans of World War I . . . and here was the gigantic and hallowed resting ground for thousands of doughboys who had resisted the German aggressors of yet another war.

A few soldiers managed to reach the inspiring memorial which rises majestically from the hill beyond Chateau-Thierry, and some viewed the ancient grey cathedral within the town. The Division, however, set its sights on the Aisne River and the heights to the north. These formed tomorrow's mission—although few doubted the attainment of any objective, except through mechanized failure. Opposition had melted to almost nothing, and Adolf Hitler had been forced to rush every available reinforcement south in an attempt to stem the tide.

Despite thin and lengthy lines of communications and difficulties of supply, the chase continued. Men of the Ninth Recon and the 15th Engineers reconnoitered crossings over the Aisne Canal and the Ailette, De Fayaux and De La Miette rivers during the early evening hours of August 30th. Leaving Fere-en-Tardenois, Reims, Fismes and way points in its wake, the Division crossed the Aisne and headed toward Belgium. In front of the combat teams roared the fast rolling Ninth Reconnaissance Troop, acting as the eyes and ears of the Division. Wheels, tracks and half-tracks bore ahead; Dizy-le-Gros was reached on the 31st; and while few infantrymen knew it, they had advanced 403 miles since the first day of August!

The land was changing now—it seemed darker, older and less productive. This was the ancient battleground of Europe and its scars had left the soil a little poorer and the natives a little less prosperous. Now it was to be spared the ruin of 1914-1918, the *Boche* were on the run!

* * * *

AS AUGUST ended, organizations like the Ninth Signal Company, the 709th Ordnance Company, the Ninth Quartermaster Company, the unit supply detachments and the medical collecting companies began to wonder how long the communication and supply lines could stretch. They already were almost to the breaking point. Improvisations were necessary, and even captured enemy equipment was beginning to become part of the Division's stock and issue. If any of these supporting units failed, the rapid advance would certainly have to halt. *Field expedients,* the technical designation for battlefield ingenuity, were the *vitamins* which kept the wheels rolling and the lines of communication stretching throughout the race across France.

During World War II, the composition of a signal company did not allow for an advance of one hundred or more miles in the course of a day's combat. Besides the necessary wire-laying and message-handling, such a gain imposed a hardship on signal repair crews, which had to keep lines open under all conditions. Back with Division headquarters, the Signal Center had to operate for twenty-four hours daily, handling hundreds of classified messages—each of which had to be encoded or decoded without delay. Up front the signalmen took their chances with the infantry, and wire crews were known to stay awake for days during emergencies, snatching a wink of sleep only when on the verge of dropping.

The Chase brought huge problems in vehicle repair. As each wheel rolled forward, there was more chance that something would wear out or break down. It did. Weapons, trucks, jeeps, armored vehicles and even watches provided the 709th Ordnance Company with an increasing amount of work. And with the line moving forward so rapidly, the Ordnance was unable to *locate* in any large civilian shop. Repairmen were forced to work by the roadside or in a farming village, as best they could. Without the 709th Ordnance Company to keep it rolling and firing, the Ninth Division would have been stopped.

Quartermaster supplies were as necessary as life itself. And the rations were far to the rear. Each day, truckload after truckload of ammunition, food and gasoline was brought forward to the Division area—now the lines were stretching beyond logistical ability. Fifteen thousand men, their vehicles and their weapons could not operate without supplies, and the roads back to the dumps were becoming more lengthy with each trip.

Similar problems were being encountered by the medical collecting companies, engineer water-point parties and the various unit headquarters. These organizations would no sooner become operative than they would have to move forward once again.

One of the enemy's greatest errors was his underestimation of the Allied ability to move rapidly forward, not pausing to replenish. With the *Red Ball* highways and aerial transportation utilized to the maximum, the food and gas and ammunition got through in August. This factor was a great aid in surprising thousands of enemy troops; one which must have saved uncountable numbers of American lives . . . for the German army was able to make a stand nowhere. By the time a future defensive line position reached the enemy troops from higher headquarters, that line was already in American hands. Thus confusion and chaos reigned throughout the retreating German *Wehrmacht*.

In the race across France, supply and communications personnel, and those who kept the vehicles rolling, did their part and a whole lot more!

* * * *

THE enemy had been out-generaled, out-fought, and out-witted during the *rat race* and now that memorable drive was carrying the *First Team* far beyond the pack—almost into the little kingdom of Belgium. Rapidly and expertly, the VII Corps changed direction on September 1st, and attacked north from Laon with the ultimate objective of reaching Mons. A lucrative prize dangled there for the plucking. By continuing its speed drive, the *First Team* might arrive in time to cut off the remnants of Von Kluge's German Seventh Army, which were attempting to escape eastward and man the *Siegfried Line*.

Lacking adequate manpower; forced to cannibalize reinforcements intended for the Russian front in order to halt the Allied hurricane from the west, the German *Wehrmacht* had assigned the job of operating the *West Wall* fortifications to those units retreating from the debacle of France. At the German frontier, where rugged woods and terrain combined to slow down any mechanized advance, the enemy planned to make his main stand.

For several years the strength of these western border defenses had constituted a problem for Allied strategists. The almost complete destruction of the German forces in the Falaise Gap, however, presented the Americans with an excellent opportunity to catch the *Siegfried's* fixed fortifications off-balance. If the swift advance of the First Army could continue unabated, the vaunted line would be insufficiently manned and the *sacred soil of the Fatherland* would feel the well-worn heels of G.I. shoes. This thought underlined VII Corps strategy.

As the days wore on, the excellent plan of General Collins began to take shape; he shot one spearhead north to Mons, thus placing a wall of steel in the path of the enemy. To the northeast he dispatched the Ninth Division, which swept through the Belgian countryside. This two-pronged drive had far-reaching results, for it created the very clever Mons Pocket and later enabled the Ninth to swing east toward the Meuse River and Germany.

During September 1st the Ninth Division launched an attack against Vervins and Hirson—the latter a small city along the heavily-wooded French-Belgian frontier. It was now that enemy resistance began to stiffen, and his roadblocks became more abundant. The 39th C.T. started the drive for Hirson, and was soon halted by a blown bridge at the village of Morgny-en-Thierache . . . temporarily at least. While the 1st Battalion forded the stream, the remainder of the regiment took alternate routes through the towns of Coingt and Cury-les-Iviers—and the push continued. Early that afternoon, the enemy opened up with heavy artillery fire. But with the assistance of tanks from the 3rd Armored Division the *Falcons* were able to enter Hirson before dark.

Meanwhile, the *Raiders* had brushed through to the west and to possession of Vervins. Although the day's actions had been light, the sights encountered enroute were long to be remembered. Savage revenge had been exacted upon the little town of Plomion by the retreating enemy. Many American soldiers had read of such cruelties; some had seen them before—however, few had cause previously to envision the sadness which had befallen Plomion. Upon leaving the area, the *S.S.* had killed many innocent women and children, burning down houses with incendiary grenades. Sadistic evidence was everywhere.

Wanton destruction of life and property had left the townsfolk in a dazed condition; grief and fear showed on their faces. They lined the streets as the Americans passed through—behind and around them were the still-smoldering ruins of their homes and the bodies of their loved ones. As the combat team rolled by one corner along the route, soldiers noticed two priests who were beside themselves with hatred. The clergymen shouted a wish to the passing Americans . . . one which must have been the hope of everyone in Plomion, "Kill them! Kill them! Kill them!"

The 60th Combat Team was beginning a month which would cost it heavily in casualties. During September, the infantry battalions suffered losses of almost 1,200 dead, wounded and missing—over one-half of their effective strength!

While the 39th and 47th attacked to the north and northwest, the *Go-Devils* bore slightly east of north, to jump off on Brunehamel and Aubenton. The 1st Battalion captured Brunehamel by mid-morning, and within a short time elements of the 3rd Armored passed through the 60th's 3rd Battalion and headed north for Aubenton. However, the tankers found an *unwelcome* mat placed before them, and after a terrific pelting by enemy artillery, *Nebelwerfer* and tank fire, were forced to withdraw. The 3rd Battalion now enveloped the town from the west, overcoming all resistance and securing the objective by 7:30 that evening . . . thus ended the Ninth Division's part in the Battle for France.

* * * *

The liberation of Belgium began at 1107 hours on Sept. 2, when recon units of the 9th Division crossed the border in the heavily wooded area near Momignies and proceeded to push toward Charleroi.

—The Stars and Stripes

S.S. VICTIMS

The Ninth Division fought in North Africa and Sicily, was one of the divisions which forced the St. Lo break-through in Normandy and was the first infantry division into Belgium.

—*Minneapolis STAR-JOURNAL*

THE race across France was giving way to the battle for Belgium. First of all Allied forces to begin liberation of that country was the Ninth Infantry Division. During the night of September 1-2, the Ninth Recon Troop screened its way toward the Belgian border; and while some wheels crossed the frontier that night, the official time of penetration was 11:07 on the morning of the 2nd. At that time the troopers became the first Allied unit to enter the kingdom, crossing the border into the village of Momignies. And so began the eleven-day campaign which carried the Ninth Division through Belgium and into Germany.

Until the enemy reached the Meuse River, he was merely to fight delaying action, covering his withdrawal to the north and northeast with mobile artillery fire and roadblocks. Paradoxically, the main factor in any slowing down of the American advance was the growing gasoline shortage, which even now was beginning to take its effect upon the 3rd Armored Division. Supplies were hard forthcoming too, and captured German food rations were finding their places on Ninth Division menus.

Despite these shortages, the Ninth continued to pursue the enemy so rapidly that his disorganization became greater. And as the men of the *Octofoil* got closer to the *Fatherland,* the Germans destroyed more equipment, employed more delaying units and used all their available infantry, mortars, artillery and tanks to slow down the Ninth's drive to the *Siegfried.* But the *Wehrmacht* was unable to hold a line anywhere short of the Meuse—thus its heavy artillery shelled all road centers and logical routes of advance, to cover German withdrawal to that river.

The day that the Recon Troop crossed into Belgium had witnessed some spirited skirmishes on the part of the Ninth's spearheads, in cooperation with the 3rd Armored Division. As long as the fuel held out, the tank-infantry teams continued to operate. On the morning of the 2nd, Colonel Bond's 39th C.T. contacted a long 3rd Armored column leaving Hirson and followed it north. The armor was halted by mines and small-arms fire at the village of Anor, in a forest clearing about 6,000 yards north of Hirson. *Falcon* infantry knocked out the opposition and the column raced ahead once more. A short while later the vehicles had to halt—there was no more fuel.

Feet were made before tanks and the infantry generally uses them anyway—so the *AAA-O* men carried on, reaching the little roadside village of Eppe Sauvage and digging in. During this day the entire 39th Infantry had been in Belgium, although it ended the night in France again—as a result of the curving nature of the frontier.

The 47th had advanced with the aid of armor during the early hours of the 2nd, moving against scattered German resistance on Hill 243—a formation about two thousand yards south of Solre-le-Chateau. But the gas shortage forced the drive to bog down. Duplicating the *Falcon* advance, the *Raiders* were forced to dismount and they pushed ahead on foot to take their hilltop objective by nightfall.

Over on the Division right flank, the 60th C.T. cracked north through the woods to take Macon and Chimay. The heights north of Macon had been infested previously with Germans, who were placed under a blanket of American artillery fire as they sought to escape to the east.

* * * *

AS IN the case of the Falaise Gap, the First Army became engaged at this time in the process of closing a huge salient . . . entrapping unit after unit of the enemy. The Mons Pocket eliminated 30,000 troops who were to have manned the *West Wall* defenses in front of VII Corps. Temporarily, at least, that left the *Siegfried Line* understrength . . . and even before the pocket had been closed, First Army recognized the good fortune at hand. The Ninth Division was ordered to change course and pivot toward Dinant. Intelligence reports had indicated that the Germans were planning to effect a strong delaying action along the Sambre River-Namur-Meuse River line; one which would allow Adolf Hitler time to reinforce his concrete defenses.

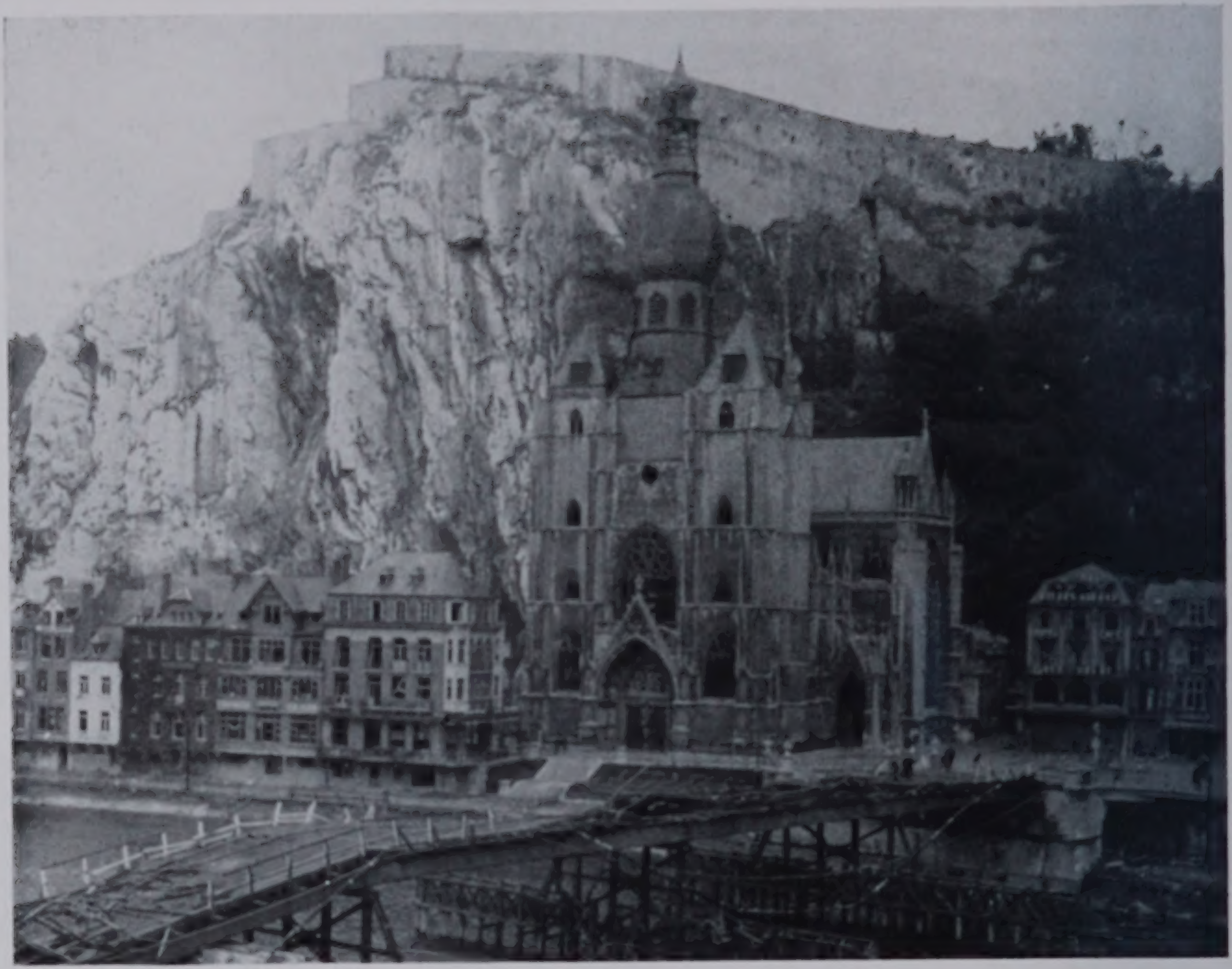
VII Corps planned to seize a bridgehead over the Meuse and reach Germany before the *Siegfried* could be brought up to its normal complement of soldiers. Speed was necessary if the border were to be reached in time . . . and the Ninth (aided by the 4th Cavalry Group) turned toward the Meuse. There it would attempt to assault eastward across that river—a feat which had perplexed military forces for a thousand years.

Motorized, reinforced by tanks, tank destroyers and light artillery, the 39th and 47th Combat Teams thrust east as dawn of September 3rd rose to light their way. The *Falcons* battled for two hours around Cerfontaine and then smashed through toward the pentagon-shaped city of Philippeville, where another struggle began. *Raider* spearheads rolled against *Nebelwerfer*, small arms and tank fire from German rear guards to occupy Beaumont and Barbecon during the mid-afternoon. One battalion of the 60th had been attached to aid the 4th Cavalry in screening forward, but the remainder of the combat team attacked east. *Go-Devils* subsequently flanked a blown bridge, and headed into mortar, small-arms, artillery and anti-tank fire to reach the high ground south of Philippeville. Here the infantry dug in for the night.

Throughout the entire day's advance the combat teams had moved exceedingly fast against spasmodic opposition. Mounted on tanks, T.D.'s and trucks, the infantry had traveled at rates of speed which brought the Ninth Division ever closer to the key town of Dinant. Perhaps the only slowing down of progress now could be attributed to the welcoming throngs of *Belgiques* who lined the roadsides. At the same time, invaluable assistance was given by the Belgian underground, which had risen to give battle to the Germans. This was the *Armee Blanche* (the *White Army*), a courageous group of patriots who gave freely of life and wealth to aid the Allied cause. Some fought alongside the men of the Ninth right up to the German border.

The civilian population, while gregariously burst-

DROITS DE L'ETAT
DOUANE BELGE



DINANT AND ITS CITADEL WERE NEXT

ing with gratitude, made certain to warn the Ninth Division that it would be suicide to attempt an assault crossing of the Meuse. These warnings grew as the Division approached the river. All along the route through Belgium, it became more evident that the natives were most cordial toward Americans, and in one town their gratitude was expressed in the sign:

WE HAVE NOT WAITED IN VAIN

* * * *

TO REACH Dinant was the next goal of the Ninth Division — Dinant, ancient bridge and ferry-crossing site over the Meuse, world-famed health and pleasure resort and location of *The Citadel* (an almost impregnable fort rising 1,000 feet above the water). It was north of Dinant, on the precipitous wooded cliffs bordering the Meuse, that King Albert of the Belgians slipped and fell to his death. Here was a rugged countryside; one well-suited to hunting, hiking, boating and mountain climbing. This was the pathway of the Meuse—Belgium's *Colorado, Mississippi, Ohio* and *Rhine* all rolled into one.

The River Meuse seems to have been content to twist and curve through the deep gorges and lovely forested regions of Belgium for centuries—carrying floating barges and small river craft, keeping numerous ferries in business and going on its merry way.

Yet this innocent-appearing waterway, with its resorts and picturesque adjacent cities has proved a military stumbling block for countless centuries. Few warrior chieftains—ancient or modern—have been able to storm eastward across it, and none had crossed it in Belgium from the time of Napoleon until 1944.

The reason for this fact is obvious upon viewing the river from the vicinity of Dinant. It is as wide as the Rhine in places, and on either side for many miles are steep rises—some sheer and others pitted with natural landings. Years ago a chain of forts ringed the eastern shore, depending primarily upon the terrain for their strength. Even in 1944, this river presented an overwhelming problem to any invading force which headed eastward. Ancients had hurled balls of fire and accurate cross-bow shots at any one bold enough to attempt a crossing from the west shore. A modern offensive from those same banks also could be stemmed.

Unfortunately, storming the Meuse *was* to prove a very difficult operation. The Germans knew full well the value of the river line, and it was here that they planned to halt the speedy American advance, thus gaining time for reinforcements to reach the *Siegfried*. Enemy defenders blew the bridges from Namur southward, and then retired to the heights. Here, sitting behind machine guns, flame-throwers and mortars, they could wait confidently. The Americans would have to climb down one side of the gorge, attempt to ford the river under fire and then have to launch an almost impossible assault uphill . . . under direct observation! If this were done, the enemy on the crest of the eastern cliffs still would possess an advantage.

Dinant, itself, offered the greatest headache for an assault crossing—storming the Meuse here was tantamount to suicide. Nonetheless, somewhere in that vicinity, the Ninth Infantry Division would have to span the river. Winning the race into Germany depended upon this. It was a nasty task but it was a necessary one.

* * * *

IN WHAT might have inspired some poet to write another *Charge of the Light Brigade*, the Ninth Division carried on its advance toward the Meuse. For several hundred men, it was the last battle . . . a harrowing fight against tremendous odds.

General Craig had ordered the 39th and 60th Combat Teams to smash through speedily and seize bridgehead sites along the river . . . and at 8 A.M. on September 4th the march on the Meuse began its last lap. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 39th Infantry spearheaded forward and quickly reached the western rises of the Meuse, in the wooded regions around Anhee—four miles north of Dinant. Almost immediately, the leading elements were subjected to artillery, machine-gun, mortar and small-arms fire from the far shore. Although reconnaissance groups were able to reach the west bank in an effort to find proper crossing sites, the German massed fire was of such intensity as to prevent the main body of the regiment from reaching the river's edge. It became increasingly evident that a successful storming over the Meuse could not be undertaken during daylight, and at 4:30 P.M. the 39th halted and prepared to cross at midnight.

While the 39th was operating to the north, footsloggers of the 60th C.T. thrust east with the mission of obtaining bridgeheads in the area between Dinant and Givet. The 2nd Battalion, on the right, pushed down the wooded hills to Agimont. Here, on the high ground northwest of Givet, artillery fell heavily from German batteries across the river. No opposition met the 3rd Battalion and that unit pushed to the slopes of Maurenne, which was about two miles northwest and up the hill from Hastiere-Lavaux. Like the *Falcons,* the *Go-Devils* sent out reconnaissance patrols to find assault boat-launching sites, but having received instructions from Division headquarters to delay the operation until midnight, stayed put.

Meanwhile, Division reconnaissance units had gone as far north as Namur where they checked upon German forces within that city and upon the condition of the bridges over the river. Their report was that the spans had been destroyed by the enemy; it would be no more feasible to cross to the north.

* * * *

AS THE Division probed along the Meuse, rubber boats and pontoon bridges were readied for the tremendous job of transporting the men of the Ninth into the enemy positions. The Division had arrived that afternoon, and now it was going to launch an assault at one minute after midnight on the following morning. Generally, a river crossing of that type would have required a great deal of time and preparation—days or even a week. But there was no time to waste, the situation called for speed . . . speed to reach the *Siegfried* before it could be properly manned, and speed to destroy the enemy to the direct front.

General Craig was faced with a tremendous responsibility in outlining the course of action; his first large-scale battle as commander of the Ninth Division could well mean disaster for the entire Division, or a smashing victory which would carry the American flag onto German soil. At that moment the Division held a sector which normally would be allotted to a Corps, and was about to attempt one of the most difficult river crossings in all Europe. Certainly a bold plan was necessary.

The strategy evolved by the Division commander was to feint an attack at Dinant with fire from the 47th Infantry, meanwhile shooting the 39th over the river at three points north of Dinant. From the area between Riviere and Yvoir, the *Falcons* would drive across the Meuse and envelop Dinant from the rear. To the south of Dinant, the 60th was to force a series of landings at two main points—Hermeton-sur-Meuse and to the north of Heer. Then the entire bridgehead would be expanded and engineer bridges would carry the remaining Division units east. Two factors which made General Craig confident of the operation were the moonlight and the flanking of Dinant. Hoonlight meant seeing the far shore a little better; flanking of the Dinant *Citadel* would spell defeat for the Nazis holding the river line.

Civilians and members of the *Armee Blanche* had brought accurate information to the Division regarding the Germans on the east bank. The enemy was bound and determined to defend fanatically each inch of ground, particularly in regard to halting attempts of the Ninth to cross the river. He had over 2,000 infantrymen, six batteries of artillery, tanks, self-propelled and anti-tank guns, and flamethrower units on the Dinant side of the Meuse. In addition the far shore was easily defended on its sheer banks.

Despite all points which weighed in favor of the enemy, and despite pleas of the friendly Belgian population to delay the crossing, the Ninth prepared to assault over the Meuse and storm the embankments at one minute after the stroke of midnight.

The enemy waited confidently on the heights!

* * * *

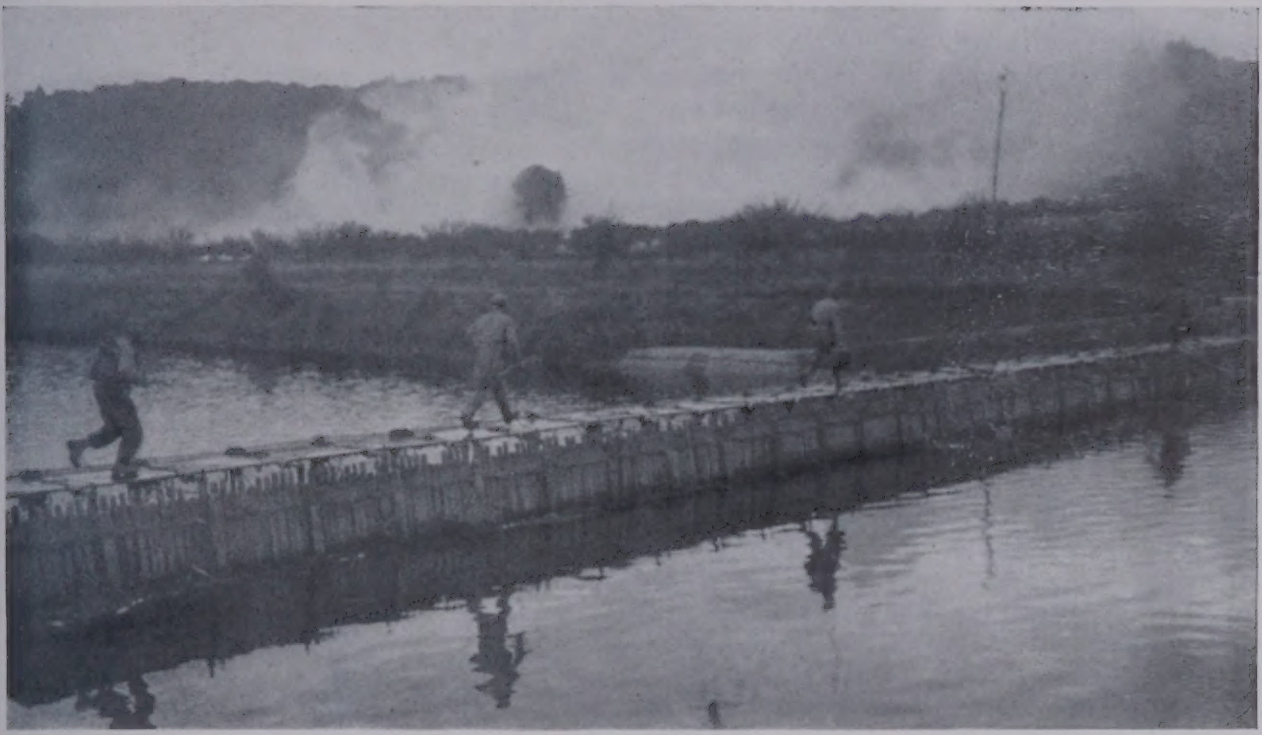
. . . . In the First Army's VII Corps sector the 9th crossed the Meuse south of Dinant, running into "nebelwerfer", flamethrowers, SP guns, tanks, everything . . . .

—The Stars and Stripes

MIDNIGHT was almost at hand. Up and down the western shore, helmeted figures became silhouetted in the moonlight as they dragged their rubber assault boats toward the water's edge. Many German outposts were watching the entire operation from the heights beyond . . . this would be like popping off ducks in a shooting gallery! On the American side, GIs were working feverishly to launch their craft on schedule . . . and the greatest difficulty in this respect was being experienced in the 39th Infantry zone.

It was now twelve . . . one minute after . . . H-Hour! Colonel Smythe's *Raiders* commenced their diversionary fire attack upon Dinant. But the *Falcons* were struggling still to reach the river's edge. Inadequate time for reconnaissance had forced the regiment to choose its crossing sites hastily . . . many were too steep for launching the small craft. Difficulties were surmounted, however, and at 3 A.M. the 1st Battalion sent over its initial waves. The enemy immediately opened up with a withering spray of machine-gun fire which sank boat after boat . . . twelve of the first fifteen assault craft were destroyed! Twenty men and the commanding officer of Company *A* succeeded in reaching the far shore, but they were no match for the enemy on the heights above. After waging a gallant fight and expending all their ammunition, the entire group was wiped out—killed, captured or wounded.

Fortunately, the enemy had neglected to destroy a catwalk slightly to the north of Anhee, and this



OVER THE CATWALK

was discovered by the 3rd Battalion. Light-toed doughboys began crossing over the tricky span at 5 A.M. against meager opposition, and fanned out to form a bridgehead. The 3rd pushed east, where its advance was contested bitterly by German machine guns, mortars and artillery. Dawn broke and the infantry continued to push forward.

During the afternoon, the 2nd Battalion moved up to the crossing site, and began negotiating the catwalk under the cover of smoke and artillery fire as darkness fell. With two battalions across, Company *A* of the 15th Engineers attempted to construct an infantry support bridge, but was forced by the intensity of the German fire temporarily to abandon the effort. Thus, as night of September 5th approached, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions were holding their bridgehead across the Meuse without any means of resupply or assistance, except by the narrow catwalk!

* * * *

MEANWHILE, further to the south, the hard-bitten 60th Infantry was living an experience which would long remain in the memories of those who survived. The 60th was not only the first Allied unit to begin crossing the Meuse, but it suffered the greatest percentage of casualties as well. Only the battle experience and gallantry of its personnel saved the regiment from virtual extinction.

One company became separated from its battalion and would have been annihilated by friendly fire, except for the bravery of two sergeants. Both assaulting battalions were all but overwhelmed by a stinging enemy counterattack backed by tanks and artillery. Yet, the combat team held its toehold in a see-saw battle which well could form the basis for a dramatic motion picture script.

Perhaps the amphibious warfare training at McFadyen's Pond had been long forgotten; maybe the hectic days of the North African invasion and the landing at Utah Beach had slipped so far into the past as to be just so much water under the bridge. Yet some sort of experience or training was evident as the *Go-Devils* and *Falcons* effected their bridgeheads. With little time for a good reconnaissance, having received their small rubber assault boats as late as one hour before jump-off time and weary from constantly pursuing the retreating Germans, the river-storming units managed to come through like thoroughbreds. There was some confusion, and a natural amount of difficulty in attacking a well-entrenched foe on commanding ground . . . nevertheless, the mission was accomplished and that tells the story.

Crossings began a little after midnight in the 60th zone, with the 2nd Battalion thrusting across the Meuse just north of Heer, and the 3rd Battalion pushing its foot troops over in the vicinity of Hermeton-sur-Meuse. Opposition to the assault was extremely heavy; however, both battalions were able to reach the eastern bank. Here fanatical Germans fiercely engaged the *Go-Devils,* who clung tenaciously to their small footholds. Once a bridgehead became firmly established, a treadway bridge was to be constructed at Hastiere-Lavaux.

While the 3rd Battalion had crossed the river without too much incident, the unit was soon fighting for breathing space in its drive north. German tank-infantry teams pounced down upon its forward elements, and enemy resistance mounted as the battalion hacked its way toward Blaimont. Casualties assumed great proportions; gains came to be measured in inches and feet . . . in the struggle along the sylvan cliffs, each man was fighting for his own existence.

* * * *

TROOPS of the 2nd Battalion were to receive the brunt of the enemy counterattacks, and battalion losses were almost eighty per cent for that unit's spearheading companies.

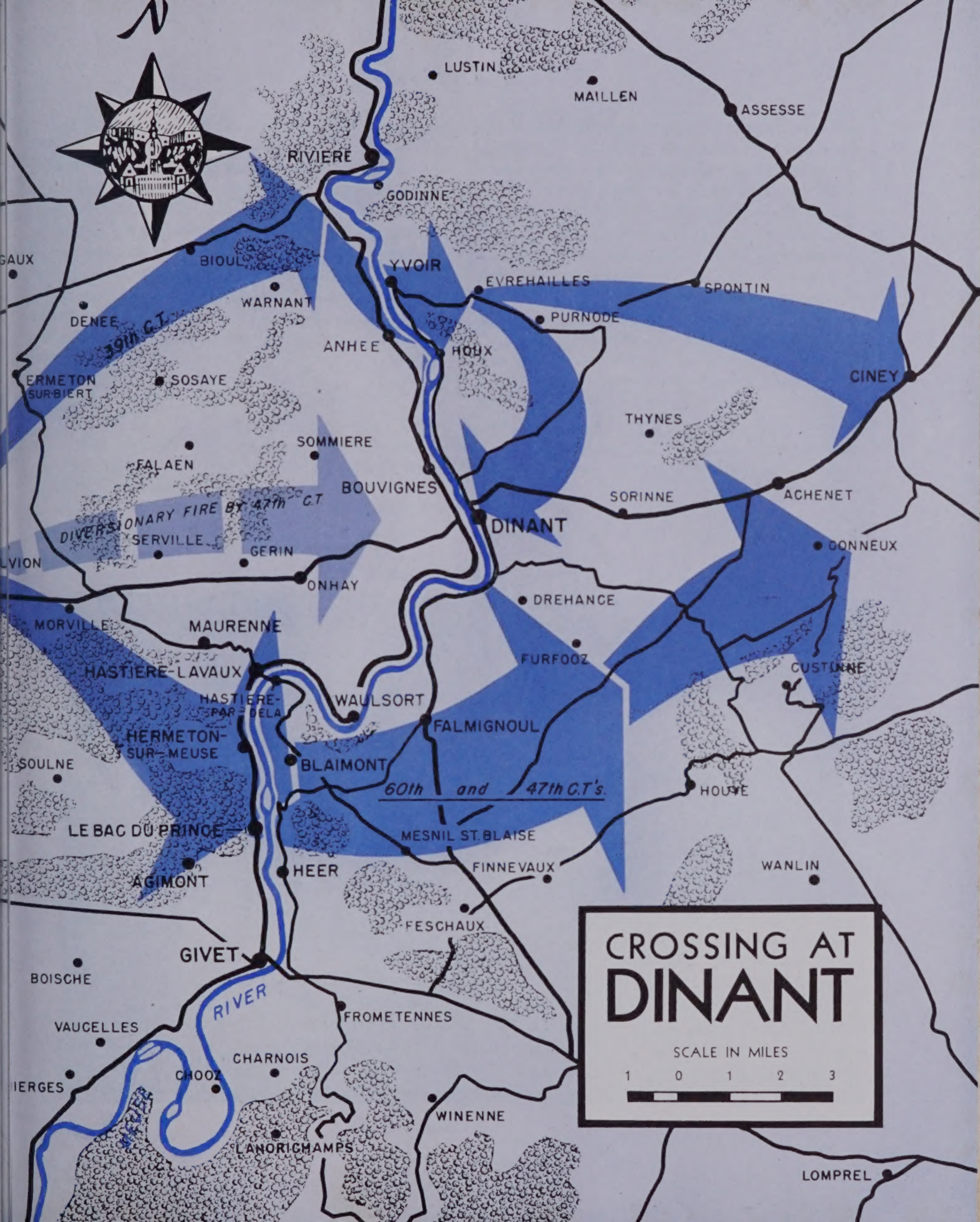
Company *E* had experienced such difficulty in crossing against a machine-gun position on the far shore, that Company *F* was taken from reserve and teamed with Company *G* for the initial assault. Just after these two companies had reached the German side, Company *E* made its way through the zone of Company *G* and commenced crossing, with the Mortar Platoon of Company *H* attached.

As soon as the opposite shore was reached, the infantrymen probed along the "steep embankment", but were unable to ascertain where the other 2nd Battalion units had made their way. In view of their precarious position along the exposed shoreline, the Americans started up the embankment to follow the probable route of the 2nd Battalion. As luck would have it, German defenses blocked the path upward. Many tries were made to break through and reach the crest of the embankment—all failed. During the last attempt of the group to gain the top of the cliff, the Germans rained down innumerable hand grenades, while a strong force of enemy infantry counterattacked from the right. About 50 Americans were captured, and the *Go-Devils* withdrew down the bank.

Unable to find elements of their own battalion, and unable to locate the whereabouts of the 3rd Battalion—which presumably was nearby and in need of assistance—the company dug in about a mile and one-half from its point of landing . . . determined to "hold what we had", and sent out patrols. These patrols returned with the astounding information that the company was situated between a powerful enemy along the river line and a concentration of Ninth Division troops to its rear. Further movement was not feasible, and so the company held fast for the night.

Company *E* was nearly wiped out the next morning by fire of friendly artillery. Captain Lloyd G. Huggins, who was an officer of Company *E* at the time, later gave the reason they were not:

"A Sergeant McClintock, weapons platoon sergeant, and another sergeant whose name I cannot remember, volunteered during the night to work their way through the Germans on the river bank and swim the river to gain contact with the American forces opposite us and give them our position. The two sergeants did do just this. They reached the Regimental C.P. of the 47th Infantry just in time to keep them from laying a preparatory artillery



CROSSING AT DINANT

N
LUSTIN
MAILLEN
ASSESSE
RIVIERE
GODINNE
AUX
BIOUL
WARNANT
YVOIR
EVREHAILLES
SPONTIN
PURNODE
DENEE
39th C.T.
ANHEE
HOUX
CINEY
ERMETON SUR-BIERT
SOSAYE
THYNES
SOMMIERE
FALAEN
BOUVIGNES
SORINNE
ACHENET
DIVERSIONARY FIRE BY 47th C.T.
DINANT
SERVILLE
GERIN
CONNEUX
LVION
ONHAY
DREHANCE
MORVILLE
MAURENNE
FURFOOZ
HASTIERE-LAVAUX
CUSTINNE
HASTIERE-PAR-DELA
WAULSORT
FALMIGNOUL
HERMETON-SUR-MEUSE
SOULNE
BLAIMONT
60th and 47th C.T.'s
HOUYE
LE BAC DU PRINCE
MESNIL ST. BLAISE
AGIMONT
HEER
FINNEVAUX
WANLIN
FESCHAUX
GIVET
BOISCHE
RIVER
FROMETENNES
VAUCELLES
CHARNOIS
IERGES
CHOOZ
MEUSE
WINENNE
LANORICHAMPS
LOMPREL
SCALE IN MILES
1 0 1 2 3

barrage upon our position which was directly across from where they were making their river crossing. If our artillery had ever opened up we were in such a position that we would have been annihilated."

Meanwhile, the other 2nd Battalion assault units had encountered a veritable *hornet's nest* of tanks and infantry about three-fourths of the way to their objective. Outnumbered and lacking armored support, the 2nd waged a game battle against tremendous odds. By afternoon the battalion was mauled so badly as to necessitate reorganization. Thus, like the 3rd Battalion, the 2nd halted, reorganized and held for the remainder of the day.

It was not a pretty picture on the east bank. The assaulting Ninth Division troops were dead on their feet, hollow-eyed and not at all like the doughboys on posters. Supplies were running low and a well-armed enemy was far from beaten.

* * * *

The extremely difficult operations of the previous day had secured two small bridgeheads across the MEUSE, one north and one south of DINANT, and other than ground which he had been forced to yield at these points, the enemy still controlled the east bank of the river between BOUVIGNES and a point opposite WAULSORT, maintaining aggressive patrols along the river bank and threatening to cross the river to harass civilians, as well as our own installations, on the west side. As yet we had not succeeded in putting a bridge across the river.

—Ninth Division Report of Operations

DURING the course of the operation, someone—presumably the enemy—had tampered with the sluices of the Meuse, causing the river level to sink. Pontoon bridge contruction became difficult and the already precarious crossing approaches became more steep. For assault troops on the eastern bank, food and fresh water were at a minimum. In the zone of the 39th, ammunition and other supplies had to

BRIDGING THE MEUSE

be carried over the catwalk, a most harrowing job under fire.

Short on rations, sleep and ammunition, the *Falcons* on the far shore nevertheless continued to enlarge their foothold during September 6th. With the 1st Battalion on the western heights throwing over supporting fires, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions carried on against a determined German defensive. At the same time, the 15th Engineers continued their attempt to span the river between Anhee and Yvoir. Once again, enemy mortar and machine-gun fire thwarted completion of that task.

As darkness approached, a most welcome sight roared into the bridgehead. It was Task Force *King* of the 3rd Armored Division, which had broken through over the Meuse to the north and was now joining the 39th C.T. for the assault on Dinant! The fatigued 3rd Battalion boarded the tanks, and with the powerful support of the task force cracked through to that town. Here the infantry-artillery-tank combination planned to launch an overwhelming assault at dawn. Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion began crossing the river at 7 P.M., and the Germans commenced looking for fast roads to the east!

To the south, the 60th Regiment continued to enlarge its bridgehead in the Hastiere-Heer area. At 4 A.M. the 1st Battalion made its way over the river in assault boats and, as dawn broke over the Belgian hills, launched an attack toward Blaimont. Flamethrowers, tanks and infantry blocked a rapid advance, and it was not until nightfall that the 1st obtained possession of the town. Hastiere-Lavaux —major Division objective—was occupied by the 3rd Battalion after a strenuous battle against an enemy backed by artillery, mortars, small arms and flame-throwers. With the capture of much-sought Hastiere, the treadway bridge over the Meuse was completed and the 3rd pushed its offensive to the southeast.

Early on the morning of the 6th, the 47th C.T. attempted to cross the river and effect a bridgehead in the vicinity of Le Bac du Prince. Unfortunately, the lead-off 1st Battalion veered too far off its course and landed upon a large island north of the Heer-Agimont Station. German troops on the eastern heights immediately subjected the battalion to such heavy fire that the Americans were forced to withdraw to the western shore.

Distinguished Unit Citation

The *Medical Detachment, 3d Battalion, 60th Infantry,* is cited for extraordinary heroism in the face of the enemy on 6 September 1944 when it accompanied the battalion under cover of darkness in assault boats to cross the Meuse River near Blaimont, Belgium, in the face of heavy enemy small-arms, mortar, and artillery fire. The detachment advanced with the battalion in the seizure of a steep, wooded hill and the western portion of Blaimont, Belgium, 2,200 yards from the river, coming under a fierce enemy counterattack of flame throwers, tanks, artillery, mortar, and machine-gun fire and a large number of enemy infantry. As a result the battalion suffered 14 casualties in addition to those incurred in the river crossing. An aid station had been set up in Blaimont when an enemy counterattack forced the battalion to retire. The enlisted medical personnel, in the absence of a surgeon, removed all equipment and casualties through the woods, down the hill under shell fire and infested with enemy troops, to the river. Finding no boat available, a detachment member swam 100 yards across the river for a boat which enabled the detachment to evacuate wounded across the river through intense fire. During this action many casualties were suffered and the boat was nearly swamped by shrapnel and bullets. Yet this heroic group continued their errand of mercy until the aid station was established on the near shore and all casualties had been evacuated. Then the detachment, still under fire, recrossed the river, returned to its former site, and treated and evacuated other casualties of the battalion. The successful and swift evacuation of over 30 casualties by the *Medical Detachment, 3d Battalion, 60th Infantry,* throughout that trying period is a tribute to the courage, devotion to duty, leadership, and initiative of all members of the detachment and was instrumental not only in saving many lives, but also by demonstrating a selfless spirit of gallantry in its care for the wounded inspired the entire 3d Battalion and was a profound factor in the excellence of its morale and consequent will to destroy the enemy.

Once again the regiment attempted to gain the far shore, this time at a site used previously by the 60th. The 3rd Battalion led the way over, followed by the badly mauled 1st. If the crossing had been without initial opposition during the second try, the landing was soon to become strongly contested. Fanatical enemy counterattacks were launched to halt the combat team from gaining any ground, and

Citation by the Belgian Government

(Order of the Day)

Operating under the high command of the 7th Corps of the United States, the 9th Infantry Division of the United States and the attached units crossed over the Belgian border, and during the period from the 3rd to the 13th of September 1944, defeated the German army in the sector Chimay-Florennes-Namur-Dinant-Givet, liberating the Belgian territory included in this zone. The Division and the attached units crossed the Meuse in force at Dinant and, pursuing his advance following the axle Huy-Theux, thrown back over the German border the enemy on his Siegfried Line defences.

for much of the day these German tactics contained the small *Raider* bridgehead. However, after the Hastiere-Lavaux bridge was finished, the 2nd Battalion of the 47th and armor from the 746th Tank and 899th Tank Destroyer Battalions rolled over to furnish support.

The actions of September 6th sealed the fate of the enemy in Belgium. If the Nazis had wanted to know the strength of the American fighting man, they no longer lacked their answer. The *impossible* crossing of the Meuse had succeeded. Dawn would bring consolidation and a continuation of *The Chase.*

* * * *

LARGE groups of the enemy withdrew during the night of September 6-7, and by morning only small rear guard forces remained along the banks of the river and immediately in front of the Ninth Division. Dinant was stormed by the 39th's 3rd Battalion and Task Force *King;* and mid-morning found that tank-infantry team in control of the town, its *Citadel* and the approaches to the highway bridge. Work began immediately to repair the span, so that Corps traffic could proceed across the Meuse. Southward, the engineer treadway bridge continued to carry the mechanized might of the Ninth Infantry Division over to the east bank. Without letup the 60th C.T. smashed through German strongpoints, to drive northeast . . . past Bois-Selles and beyond.

As the Meuse defenders limpingly made their way back from Dinant toward Liege, the weary and victorious combat teams of the Ninth tenaciously followed. Respite was not to be the lot of the Nazi remnants . . . nor that of the Ninth Division. With its capable partners of the race across France—the 3rd Armored Division and the 4th Cavalry Group—the Division began *leap-frogging,* hopping rides on armored vehicles and heading toward the *dragon's teeth* of the *Siegfried.*

. . . One regiment covered forty miles on foot in twenty-four hours. The crossing of the Meuse required two or more full days without sleep for a large proportion of the Division.

—Major General Louis A. Craig

It had been noticed during the afternoon of September 7th that the Germans were trying to disengage from action and make their way into the protection of the *Siegfried.* In his retreat, the enemy left behind masses of equipment and fuel-dry vehicles. American artillery beat down a steady rain of death and destruction upon the large bodies of Germans who, without adequate motor transportation, were experiencing difficulty in reaching their goal.

Farther south, on the right flank of the corps, the 9th Division continued to advance rapidly against well-organized defenses conducted by panzer grenadiers of "Der Fuehrer" Regiment . . .

—First Army Report of Operations

For the next few days, the three combat teams of the Ninth Division seemed to be in a race for the German border. The 39th advanced without opposition to the vicinity of Villiers le Temple, captured many prisoners at Terwagne, drove against fortified German positions near Louveigne in a daring motor assault, rolled through unpronounceable Soheit Tinlot and by September 10th had reached the vicinity of Theux. A footbridge was located there, and the leading elements of the regiment dismounted. They proceeded across the stream and advanced to the high ground at Oneux, which placed the *Falcons* only four miles southwest of the beautiful Belgian city of Verviers. A short distance beyond and through the woods lay Germany—and the *Siegfried.*

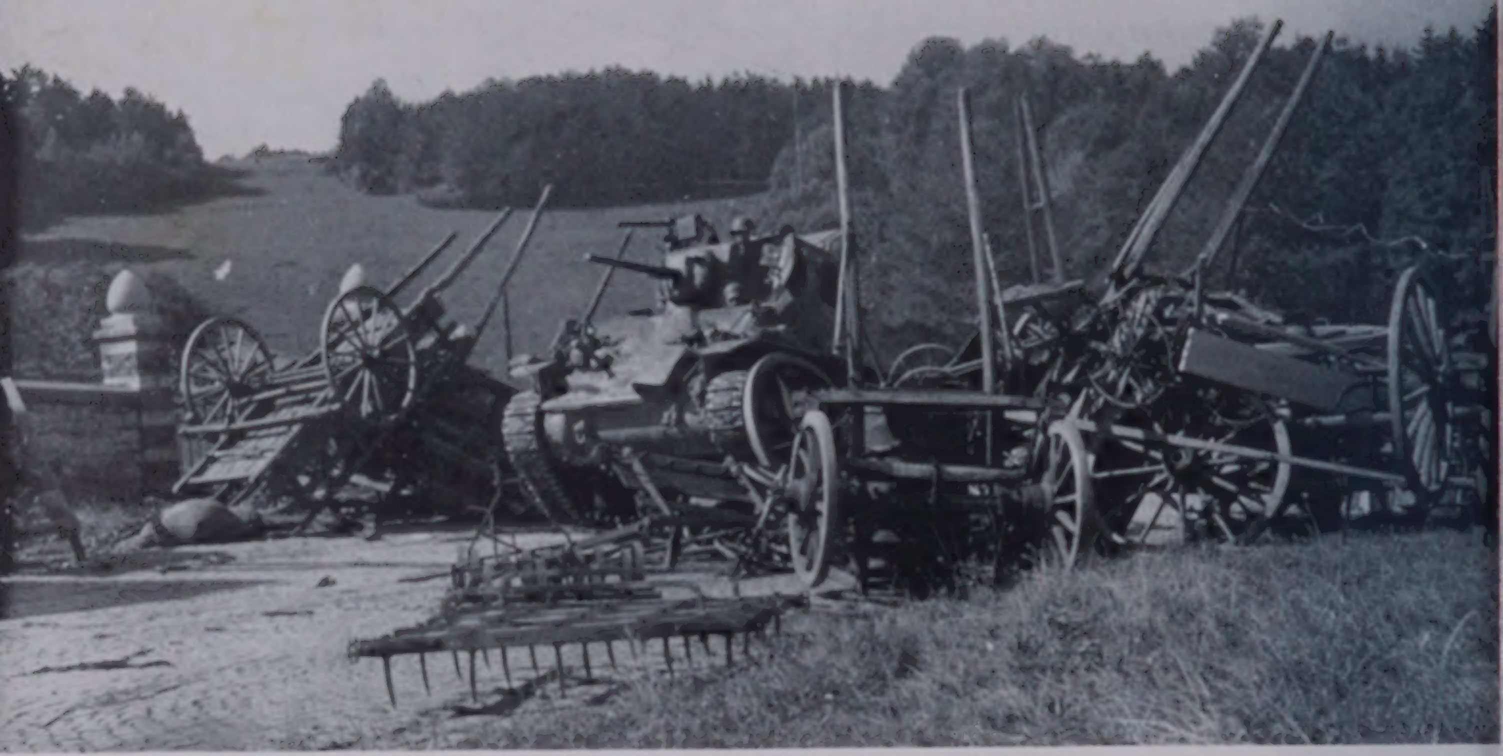
Recuperating from their losses along the Meuse, the *Go-Devils* rapidly rolled over the hills and through the woods of rural Belgium. They met a great deal of opposition at Bois-et-Borsu (where 200 Germans were killed) and then pushed on via Pau, Warzee, Bende, over the Ourthe River at Poulseur, past weak German defenses, through the gorge to Sprimont and south beyond Aywaille—where armored reinforcements were to have come and didn't. Short of fuel, the 60th proceeded without tank support on September 10th and captured Hotton, Le Grande Pre and Manhay in the heavily forested sector south of Aywaille.

Meanwhile, the 47th C.T. had led a very lively existence since leaving Hastiere-Lavaux. The *Raiders* made great speed to liberate Ciney (where the *Armee-Blanche* had been extremely numerous), then became attached to the 3rd Armored Division in its drive on Liege. Infantrymen of the 47th moved south of Liege on the 8th and entered the city during the 9th, to help clear out remaining opposition. It was in this lovely capital of French-speaking Belgium, that counter-intelligence personnel contacted members of the underground, obtaining plans of the *Siegfried Line* defenses from a British agent. This information was passed on to the Ninth Division and later proved extremely helpful. With the city of Liege and its ring of forts cleared, the 47th rejoined the Ninth on the evening of the 10th.

* * * *

BY SEPTEMBER 11th the last German forces were withdrawing so rapidly that contact was lost in the vicinity of Liege, Verviers, Limbourg and before Aachen and the *West Wall.* Not just the Ninth Division, but the entire *First Team* carried on the advance to the east and girded its loins for the inevitable push into the *Reich*. As a countermeasure, the enemy supreme command had ordered a general reforming along the *Siegfried* . . . and the bottom of Germany's manpower barrel was scraped

ON TO GERMANY



ROADBLOCKS FAILED TO HALT THE ADVANCE

in order to halt any American penetration of the *Fatherland.*

Only small, harassing rear guard groups, blown bridges, mines and roadblocks lay between the VII Corps and Germany. It was now just a matter of hours before the main enemy defenses would be reached and the battle of Germany would begin. Along the international border, the *First Team* had reached the stage of sparring for an opening . . . and from Aachen to the Ardennes, the enemy prepared to parry all blows.

The 47th moved east of Verviers, while the 60th assembled northeast of Sprimont (after leaving a small detachment to guard the bridge at Aywaille). Simultaneously, the 39th completed its crossing at Theux and dispatched two battalions south in support of the 4th Cavalry Group—which was engaged strongly near Malmedy. Opposition continued to the cavalry advance, and during September 12th the Ninth ordered the remainder of the 39th C.T. to clear the area south of Stoumont and La Gleize.

At least some of the enemy had not given up in Belgium. On the 12th, the Ninth's assistant Division commander Brigadier General Kenneth Buchanan, led a special task force to determine the strength and presence of the enemy within the Division's boundaries. This force, composed of the Ninth Recon Troop, a rifle company of the 60th Infantry and one platoon of the 899th Tank Destroyer Battalion discovered German armor and infantry northeast of Malmedy. In several ensuing skirmishes, the Americans lost four armored cars—although there were no serious injuries.

Elsewhere, however, the Nazi military machine had become snail-like and withdrawn into its concrete and steel shells along the growth-covered *Siegfried.* The Americans facing this vaunted work of Hitler's slave labor had but one mission now: crack through the *Siegfried Line.* Into the lair of the *goose-stepping sons of the Fatherland* went patrols of the 47th and 60th Regiments—to reconnoiter and find routes of advance into Fortress Germany.

Southward at Dijon, France, the U.S. Seventh Army had linked up with the U.S. Third, and the Battle of France was over. By the afternoon of the 12th, no less than three American units had laid claim to having set foot upon German soil. General Craig had received his instructions on this day as well—the Ninth was to break through the *West Wall* in its zone and push on to the Roer.

* * * *

BY NOW the patrols were back, the combat teams were ready—and in its tenacious manner, the Division thrust through the last barriers before the German border. Belgium soon would be in the past; ahead lay the most rugged fighting the Ninth Division would encounter. What had transpired during the exciting chase across the tricolor republic and the friendly little kingdom was history . . . a history not yet dry on the pages of time. Perhaps that period is best summarized in the letter of commendation which the Corps commander, General Collins sent to the Division around that time:

"After the fall of Cherbourg the 9th Division participated in the bitter fighting in the swamps and hedgerows of Normandy, and contributed materially to the breakthrough of the German defenses that ended the 'hedgerow' fighting and opened the war of maneuver. Joining in the pursuit, the division secured the left flank of the VII Corps in its drive on Mortain, then bore a large share of the vicious attacks of the German Seventh Army in the Mortain-Cherence le Roussel area aimed at separating the American First and Third Armies. With these German attacks beaten off, the 9th Division again participated in the pursuit that assisted in closing the Falaise Gap from the south.

"After crossing the Seine, the Marne, and the Aisne rivers in rapid succession, the 9th Division again came to grips with the retreating enemy in the edge of the Ardennes Forest east of Hirson and drove him across the Meuse. The division's successful crossing of the Meuse in the vicinity of Dinant, in the face of strong opposition, was one of the most difficult tasks of this war. Using assault boats and rafts, the initial crossing was at night. Despite heavy losses the division established a secure bridgehead; which it held against spirited German counter attacks, then completed its crossing and routed the enemy which fled to the east. The pursuit continued without pause until the division had joined in the breakthrough of the 'West Wall.'

"During these extensive operations the 9th Division advanced almost six hundred miles against enemy opposition, captured over 28,000 prisoners and participated in three major campaigns with not more than five days out of action in a period of over four months. This outstanding record is one of the finest in the European Theater."

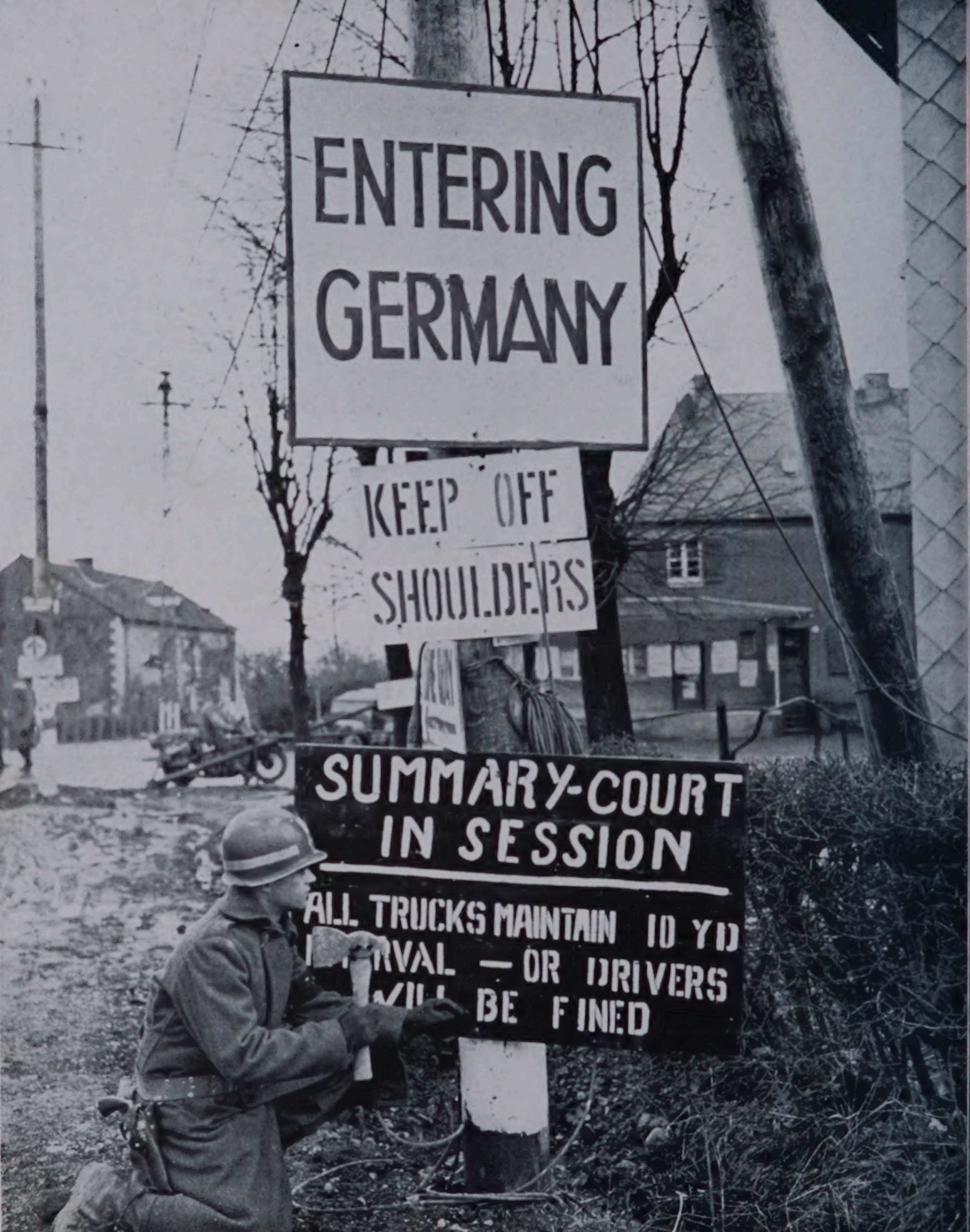
That was the end of *The Chase*, and it was the beginning of another type of warfare . . . one more deadly and costly than the hedgerow fighting of Normandy. But more than ever the Ninth Infantry Division possessed the intestinal fortitude and the experience necessary for the job. German intelligence reports backed that point; flanking units relied upon it.

Yes, ahead lay more tough fighting . . . and it was

EASTWARD HO!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Section VIII photography credits: Pages 198, 202, 203, 205, 207, 212, 213, 216, 217, 225, 226, 229, 235, 236 are Official U.S. Army Signal Corps Photos; 211, 223 are by 39th Infantry; 220 by Author.


ENTERING GERMANY
KEEP OFF SHOULDERS
SUMMARY-COURT IN SESSION
ALL TRUCKS MAINTAIN 10 YD
RVAL — OR DRIVERS
WIL BE FINED

Section IX

EASTWARD HO!

Into Germany

IT WAS September 13, 1944. The cold haze of early morning evidently had signaled the reawakening of German resistance, for enemy artillery fire fell on Ovifat and heavy caliber weapons pounded the Umbourg-Eupen highway. *Jerry* was transforming his delaying tactics into a large scale attempt aimed at halting the American tide. He used mines, demolitions, tanks and small bodies of infantry to gain precious time for reinforcing the *Siegfried* . . . the chips were down, his *Fatherland* was at stake!

On the other side of the fence, infiltrating infantrymen of the Ninth were meeting sporadic fire peppering the densely wooded area southeast of Eupen as they launched a two-pronged attack in the direction of Dueren and moved through the area Eupen-Roetgen in line with an all-out VII Corps drive to the east and northeast. To their front lay the vaunted and extensive positions of the *Siegfried*—half-obscured beneath four years of growth. Up north were the 1st Infantry and 3rd Armored Divisions, beginning their famous drives on Aachen and Stolberg. Guarding the Corps right flank was the 4th Cavalry Group—which, like the 3rd Armored, was fighting alongside the Ninth.

It was September 13th and shortages of supply, ammunition and fuel were forgotten temporarily as the Ninth opened its portion of the struggle for Germany. The battle of attrition had begun. On this day the rapid and victorious 450-mile advance across France and Belgium gave way to the knock-down, drag-out, see-saw warfare of the *Siegfried* and the Huertgen. Leading for the veteran Ninth Infantry Division was the 39th Infantry—the only infantry to enter Germany that day. *Paddy* Flint would have been proud!

As the 13th yawned awake, grizzled fighting men of the *AAA-O* 39th Infantry swept forward to clear the Eupen-Monschau road, thus opening the long and costly drive through the treacherous Huertgen Forest. Through the *Dragon's Teeth* and past the barriers pushed the *Falcons*. Although slowed by felled trees, craters, booby traps and mines, the doughs of the 39th continued their steady advance. Some footsloggers were aboard tanks and others strode ahead. Germany was under foot and a town beckoned in the distance.

The dismal greyish line of teeth stretched seemingly harmless and endless over the rolling countryside as the *Falcons* took up positions south of Roetgen. When night blacked-out the eerie, forested frontier, the results of the day revealed history in the making. For in their drive with the 3rd Armored, men of the 39th had descended upon drab, dreary, damp Roetgen, first German town of the war to be captured!

Meanwhile, the 47th Infantry was on the high ground east of the Belgian city of Eupen, preparing to make some history of its own on September 14th. Further south, Task Force *Buchanan* was formed from the 60th's 1st Battalion, the Ninth Recon Troop, Company *B* of the 746th Tank Battalion, one platoon of tank destroyers and the 60th Field Artillery. Brigadier General Kenneth Buchanan's command captured muddy, sleepy Sourbrodt and began an advance on Camp Elsenborn, former Belgian

A brief European itinerary of this crack European infantry division follows:

. . . . Sept. 13—Troops moved into Germany south of Roetgen.

Sept. 14—Infantry regiment breached Siegfried Line advancing through first and second-line defenses.

—The Stars and Stripes

army post situated in the woods southeast of Eupen and northwest of Elsenborn town.

The Ninth Division had the dual missions of penetrating the defenses of the *West Wall* and seizing the road centers in the vicinity of Dueren. General Craig, furthermore, had been directed to cut the "impenetrable" position lines of the west by the 17th. This huge order *was* complied with, but capturing the road centers near Dueren was to consume several months of fighting. Between that increasingly battered city and the positions of the Ninth stretched thick fortified woods and rugged terrain—an area which required heavy supporting fires. Unfortunately, that type of ammunition was in short supply.

So rapid had been the *rat race* through France and Belgium that supplies were unable to keep pace with frontline units. During the week preceding entry into Germany the 60th C.T. had been forced to proceed without tanks, although plans called for its being reinforced heavily with armor. The situation is described aptly in *Mission Accomplished:*

> *Gasoline could not be brought up fast enough to refuel the armored divisions leading the drive. Ammunition for a major battle could not be delivered to the guns. Troops ate captured German rations and concentrated American rations to conserve shipping space. VII Corps, leading the First U.S. Army, had outrun its supplies, and its drive was stalled.*

* * * *

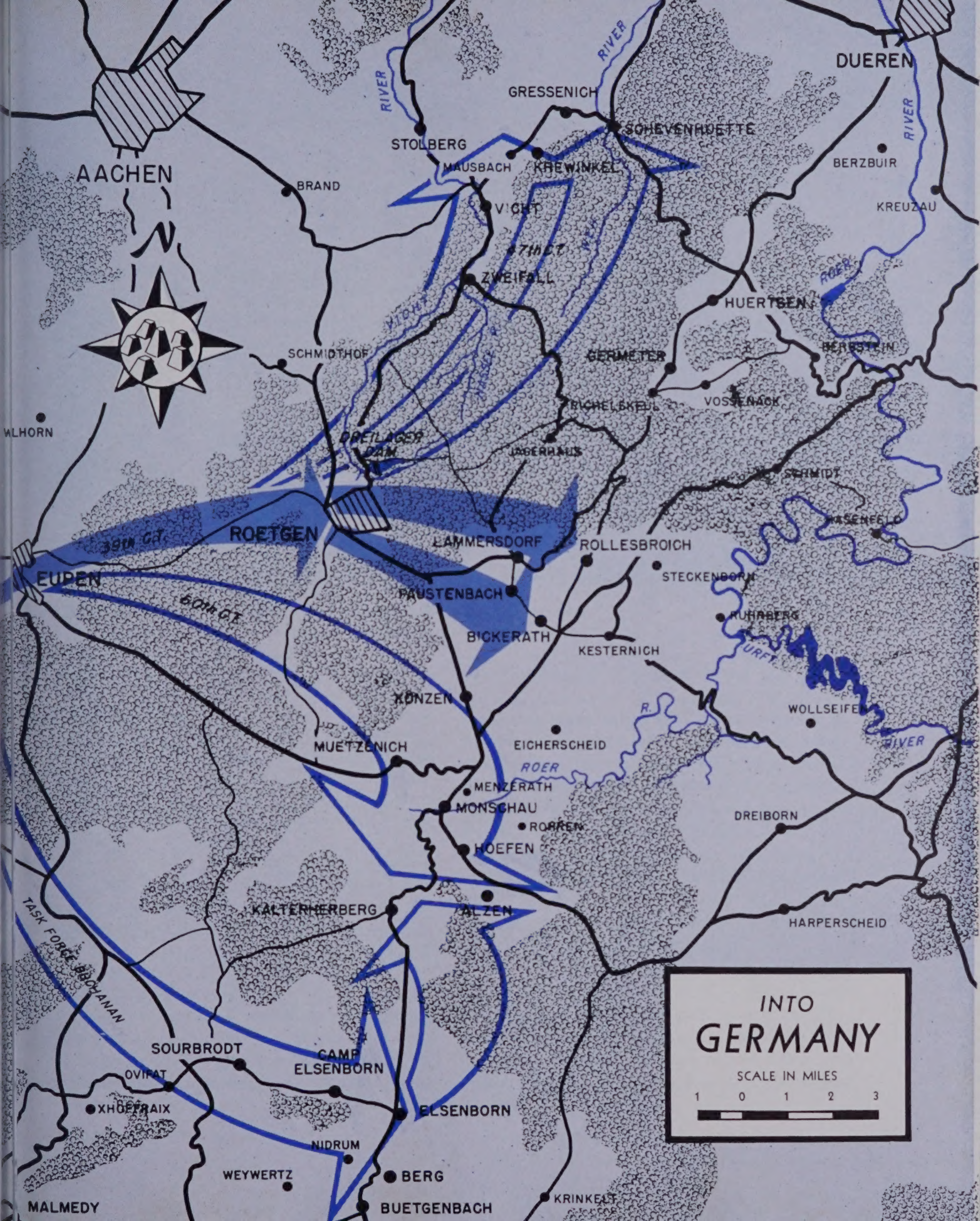
THE weather was anything but favorable on September 14th. A steady drizzle which began during the preceding afternoon had grown more heavy by the hour. Gradually the continuous rainfall increased in intensity, becoming a "drenching downpour" which kept its strength until about noon of the 14th. By then the ground was a cold mass of mud; the damp, wooded areas had assumed a more forbidding appearance and the going became tougher on the footsloggers, who had to keep continually alert for signs of the enemy.

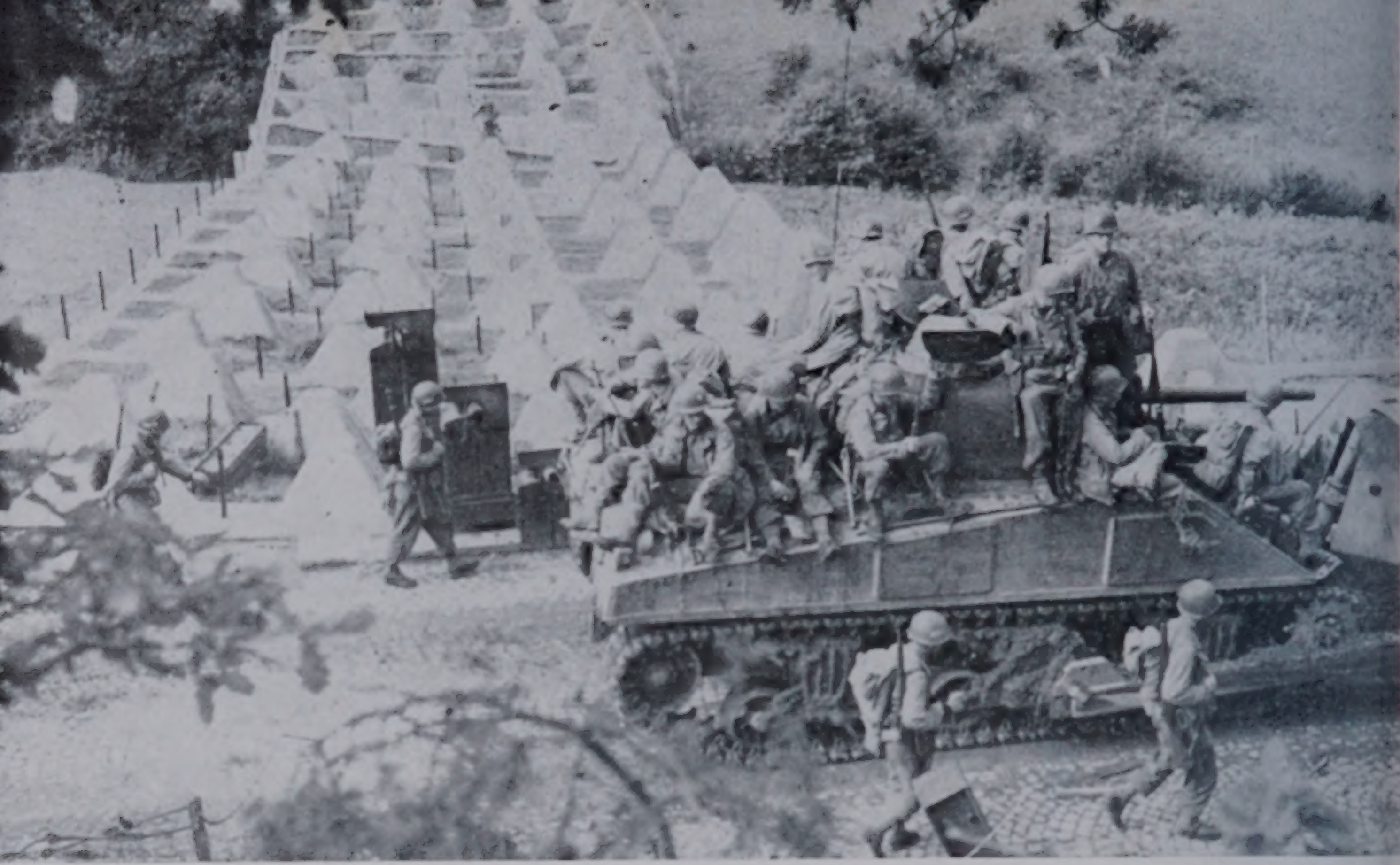
> *The 47th Infantry was the first to breach the Siegfried line, and went through the line first without opposition at 8:30 A.M., on 14 September 1944.*
>
> *—A combat narrative*

Perhaps the most important event of the day was the attack launched by the 47th C.T. at 8:30 on the morning of the 14th. This drive was in coordination with the 39th to the south, for both had their sights on far-off Dueren, which lay beyond the woods. Colonel Smythe's *Raiders* were preceded by a patrol made up of one squad of the 47th Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon and two tanks of the 746th. Led by this advance force the column crossed the German frontier at Roetgen and carried on until it reached a road junction a few thousand yards to the northeast (near the Dreilaeger Dam). Here the 3rd Battalion parted company with the column and pointed east into the Roetgen Forest. Simultaneously the 1st Battalion, followed by the 2nd, headed north for Zweifall—the town which stands sentinel over the V-shaped piece of land where the Vicht River spills out part of its flow to form the smaller Hassel.

No opposition was encountered by the 1st Battalion as it advanced to Zweifall, none except a blown bridge at the Hassel—the only structure suitable for crossing at that site. Company *B*, 15th Engineers quickly constructed a temporary bridge, however, and the 1st entered the town. Patrols were dispatched toward Vicht later in the day and these reported that a bridge just south of Vicht had been blown similarly by the retreating Germans, and that the enemy occupied fortified positions in the area. That night American heavy weapons and artillery played havoc with these emplacements.

As the 3rd Battalion turned to the east out of Roetgen, a situation occurred which required quick thinking. Technical Sergeant Charles A. Karnak was leading his platoon deployed along the left side of the road. The platoon leader almost stumbled upon a concrete pillbox which was hidden and camouflaged so cleverly that one had to come within a few yards to notice it. Two enemy soldiers were standing at the entrance to the emplacement and Karnak saw them first. He ordered them to surrender and the Germans did—in fact, a few moments


INTO
GERMANY
SCALE IN MILES
1 0 1 2 3
AACHEN
DUEREN
GRESSENICH
STOLBERG
SCHEVENHUETTE
MAUSBACH
KREWINKEL
BERZBUIR
KREUZAU
BRAND
VICHT
47th C.T.
ZWEIFALL
HUERTGEN
RIVER
ROER
BERGSTEIN
SCHMIDTHOF
GERMETER
VOSSENACK
RICHELSKEUL
JAGERHAUS
DREILAGER DAM
SCHMIDT
HASENFELD
WALHORN
39th C.T.
ROETGEN
LAMMERSDORF
ROLLESBROICH
STECKENBORN
EUPEN
60th C.T.
PAUSTENBACH
RUHRBERG
URFT
BICKERATH
KESTERNICH
KONZEN
WOLLSEIFEN
EICHERSCHEID
MUETZENICH
ROER
MENZERATH
MONSCHAU
ROHREN
DREIBORN
HOEFEN
KALTERHERBERG
ALZEN
HARPERSCHEID
TASK FORCE BUCHANAN
SOURBRODT
CAMP ELSENBORN
OVIFAT
XHOFFRAIX
ELSENBORN
NIDRUM
WEYWERTZ
BERG
KRINKELT
MALMEDY
BUETGENBACH



INTO THE SIEGFRIED

later fifteen more enemy left the structure and gave up.

Once again the 3rd took up the march to the east, moving along the road which was on the regiment's southern flank and arriving in time to aid an embattled patrol of the 47th's Recon Platoon in routing a large enemy force and capturing 40 prisoners. This done, the 3rd moved forward against scattered rear guard units and headed for its objective line. Further north the 2nd Battalion passed through the 1st—which had been ordered to hold Zweifall—then turned right on a road leading southeast from that town. Following several brief skirmishes along its route the battalion halted for the night—which equally proved to be fairly peaceful.

The advance of the 47th had been rapid; its 3rd Battalion ended the day six miles northeast of Roetgen, while its 1st and 2nd Battalions had been equally successful to the north. The *Raiders* chalked up another *first* on this day, too—a most important one. In their advance into Germany, they had become the first Allied unit to breach completely the outer defenses of the *West Wall* . . . and they already were headed into the second line! Next night, in the music-halls of England, over the radios of America and on the streets of Allied cities was whistled the tune *We're Gonna Hang Our Washing on the Siegfried Line!* But the 47th was not stopping to do washing—not just yet!

Other portions of the line also had been busy on the 14th. Task Force *Buchanan* captured Camp Elsenborn, the area which later figured so prominently in Division operations, both as a rest center and as a command post. The 39th, meanwhile, advanced to the northeast during early morning, sloshing through the mud against mines and other obstacles. In the afternoon, mortar, machine-gun, artillery and small-arms fire hit the *Falcons* from the right flank. The regiment kept moving forward, however, sustaining relatively small losses and reaching the well-fortified rolling heights bounding Lammersdorf.

At 5:45 P.M. the 26th Field Artillery Battalion was in dire straits, having been met by an overwhelming German force. It was at this time that the 60th Infantry's Company *K* took off with tank and tank destroyer support to clear up the situation within four hours. As for the remainder of the 60th C.T., they were pushing into the Monschau sector.

* * * *

ALONG the *Siegfried* the enemy withdrew his patrols as he manned the pillboxes and other permanent installations of the line. Given the mission of penetrating these defenses on September 15th, the 39th Infantry executed a wide flanking movement into the vicinity of Lammersdorf, which was met by machine-gun, mortar and high-velocity artillery fire. The purpose of this flanking by the 3rd Battalion had been to cut out a pocket of German troops in front of the 1st Battalion and although this pocket was not eliminated completely, a pillbox plus three 20mm guns were destroyed.

Widening its breach against increasing opposition, the 47th thrust approximately five kilometers inside the first position of the *West Wall,* capturing 400 prisoners enroute. It was a strenuous day for the *Raiders,* one of counterattacks and infiltrations by the enemy.

The entire regiment was to have jumped off at 8:30 A.M. But during the early hours of morning the 3rd Battalion became engaged in a fire fight with the enemy who had been withdrawing from in front of the 39th and wandered into the positions of the 47th. Nearly a battalion of Germans attacked a small roadblock to the south of Company *M* at 4 A.M. Outnumbered greatly, the Americans requested permission to withdraw their little force to another position; but they were ordered to hold—and they did. The enemy by-passed the roadblock and formed a column of threes, evidently to maintain contact during the darkness. Led by an officer, this column proceeded north in the dimness of early dawn and headed for the main body of the 3rd Battalion.

Staff Sergeant James La Barr gazed from his position to see a column turning a bend in the road which was approximately 150 yards to his front. To be on the safe side, La Barr trained his carbine on the officer leading the column and waited until they came close enough for him to get a good look.

First move was made by the officer who saw La Barr and reached for his machine pistol—that was the last time he reached for anything. The sergeant put a bullet between his eyes. Private Wiremen, who was nearby killed the man behind the officer with a .45 slug and the battle began. Pfc. Luther Roush jumped aboard a tank destroyer, and when a shoulder wound knocked him from the vehicle, he climbed back aboard to disperse the enemy with 50-caliber machine-gun fire from the destroyer. Mortars and attached tank destroyers forced the Germans to scatter further and the 3rd counterattacked. The enemy was driven off by 9:30 A.M., a badly shattered remnant of the column which had come up the road to face Staff Sergeant La Barr and Private Wiremen.

Company *E,* 2nd Battalion, was on the receiving end of attacks from the north and northeast at 10 A.M., which were launched by German infantry supported by armor. This organized assault of the enemy was quite strong and since Company *E* was alongside the 3rd Battalion, that battalion was dispatched at 11 A.M. to aid the 2nd. Two hours later the attack was neutralized, but not before two unusual occurrences had transpired. The first appeared in *The Stars and Stripes* under the title *IF HE COULD ONLY COOK!*:

The 9th Division's 47th Infantry boasts a "fighting first cook" in T/4 Clarence Ed Combs, of Middletown, Ohio. A tiger tank drew up in front of his kitchen, so Combs discarded his meat cleaver for a bazooka. After blowing in the side of the tank, he polished off the crew. "What a man," sigh members of the company. "If he could only cook!"

The second item was part of an after-action report made to the War Department by the First Army Historical Section:

While the above attack was in progress, one man

THIS *WAS* A PILLBOX

from Co. "I", who just prior to the action had suffered an attack of acute appendicitis, was lying in a roadside ditch awaiting the arrival of the ambulance to evacuate him. Several of the enemy passed over him, one even stepping on him and continuing on. He waited for the last one of the enemy group to approach and took him prisoner. When last seen, by Lt. Robert F. Hedges, he was hobbling down the road, bent double with pain, with his prisoner in front of him.

In the meantime, the 1st Battalion struck out from Zweifall and entered into a chase to catch some enemy soldiers who were ascertained to be retreating northeast toward Schevenhuette. Companies *C* and *D* succeeded in capturing nearly one hundred of these Germans during the morning. By 4 P.M. the 1st Battalion was pushing out with the 3rd on its right . . . the flanking of Vicht was their objective.

There was a fourth part to the Ninth's attacks along its lengthy front on the 14th, the early morning 60th C.T. onset to take the important towns of Monschau and Hoefen, as well as contacting their 1st Battalion (then a part of General Buchanan's force to the south). Everything went well for the 60th until the enemy let fly some particularly heavy small-arms and mortar fire from Muetzenich, after which it was slow going. Nonetheless, when the attack halted in the woods for the night, the 60th's 3rd Battalion was on the high ground south of the Roer River at Monschau and the 2nd Battalion was within the quaint town itself. That placed part of the regiment over the Roer, making the 60th the first Allied unit to cross that turbulent stream. But German units withdrawing over the river had knocked out the bridges, and the American troops to the south had grave problems regarding replenishment of their ammunition and food supplies.

* * * *

UNDER direct orders of Hitler, the manpower barrel of Germany was scraped and every available male—aged 14 to 60 years—was rushed to the *West Wall.* This plan of utilizing Germany's manpower to the utmost saw the enemy send over 230,000 reinforcements to meet the new American threat in September alone, and the foe's stop-gap soldiers were able to bolster the line against further large gains.

At first these troops were but a steady trickle, and had it not been for the shortage of gasoline and other supplies, the First Army might have broken through and reached the Rhine. Be that as it may, *Wehrmacht* reinforcements now were pouring into the *West Wall.* Although a majority of them had little combat experience, and while many had been trained for as little as two weeks in the art of war, they were supported by artillery and permanent fortifications. Anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons ringed their fortified zone and—most important—they were fighting in defense of their homeland. Thus, despite their inferiority, the enemy troops—with fanatical exhortations and threats of their Nazi leaders—began to offer more stubborn opposition.

Against this additional resistance, the 39th's Company *I,* supported by 155mm self-propelled guns, broke through the *Dragon's Teeth* obstacles and reduced twelve pillbox fortifications by infantry and assault gun action during September 16th. It was a tedious, slow, steady advance which found Company *I* around the road center northwest of Lammersdorf at dusk.

The 47th continued to clear out enemy resistance between Zweifall and Vicht, pocketing 175 more *Siegfried* defenders and penetrating the second position of the *West Wall.* As the *Raiders* moved further into the fortified zone, they were amazed at the ease with which they advanced in their drive northeast. The fact of the matter was that, although even poorly trained enemy troops could wage a stiff battle when they expected an attack, the majority of the German defenders were unaware that the 47th had advanced so far, and many wandered aimlessly into *Raider* positions. Then, too, a German engineer map which had been captured the day previous showed the Americans the exact locations of every emplacement in the Zweifall area and it was thus that the regiment was able to extend far north to occupy Vicht, Mausbach and Krewinkel.

While the 1st and 2nd Battalions were operating to the north, the 3rd Battalion tramped through the woods to capture and occupy the town of Schevenhuette, which sits beside the Weh River. Beyond this point jutted the final ring of positions . . . the last fortifications of the *Siegfried.* Momentarily the 3rd turned northwest to capture Gressenich and widen its breach, but it was met with a great deal of opposition and stayed in place for the night.

Meanwhile, the 60th C.T. marched toward Hoefen, silencing five pillboxes enroute. Its 2nd Battalion remained in the Monschau area, where it received flanking fire from the fortifications on the hill line to the east. South of Hoefen, Task Force *Buchanan* had reached the edge of Alzen and disbanded. The 1st Battalion of the 60th reverted to

MONSCHAU

The picturesque mountain-base town of Monschau, whose ancient history is replete with legends of fairies, goblins, monsters and super-human foresters, has a rightful place in the sightseeing hall of fame. This quaint town nestles on the steep sides of the twisting canyon which houses the swift Roer River.

Beyond the rim of Monschau and to the northeast lay (in 1944) the first position lines of the Siegfried, to the south and east rose the dark Monschau Forest and slightly south stretched the regions which were to become so well-known to the men of the Ninth—places like Hoefen, Alzen, Kalterherberg, Camp Elsenborn, Buetgenbach and Berg.

Monschau was a road center and lay astride the best routes through the area. It was there that the northern portion of Von Rundstedt's ill-starred winter counter-offensive was to be stopped by a memorable stand of the 47th C.T. And it was at Monschau that the Ninth Division discovered the treacherous *Maria of Monschau,* a beauteous Nazi whose dispatches into unoccupied Germany condemned vilely the very Americans who had saved her life.

Such was Monschau, tinderbox town of the border—picturesque, protected from most enemy artillery fire . . . gateway to the east.

PICTURESQUE MONSCHAU

its regiment and now the *Go-Devils* had the 4th Cavalry on their flank.

During the 16th the *Raider* 3rd Battalion had captured the German colonel commanding the M.P.'s in that district who was on reconnaissance outside of Schevenhuette. On the night of September 16-17 a strong outpost of the 47th was placed astride the last pillbox position of the *Siegfried* in the *Raider* zone, which proved to be a fortunate move. Some of the inquisitive Americans happened to notice a telephone which was located inside the fortification and were surprised upon lifting the receiver, to hear a German colonel calling the German commander of the region over this inter-fortification system. The enemy conversation centered around the launching of a withering artillery bombardment on the 47th positions the next morning, which was to be followed with an infantry counterattack in strength.

Details of the conversation were noted and relayed back to the regiment for immediate action. Just prior to the planned enemy attack, guns of the 84th Field Artillery and *Raider* mortars opened fire and smashed the German attempt—which would have made the American forward positions untenable, had it been successful.

The Germans, nevertheless, were able to mount several counterattacks against the 47th C.T. on the 17th, forcing the regiment to change its strategy. Originally, the 47th was to have captured Gressenich in a two-pronged thrust, while defending the right flank of the VII Corps from the north, northwest and northeast at the same time. This plan was altered to conform with the situation found that morning. At 6:30 A.M. the 3rd Battalion reported that it was partly surrounded. The infantry drove off the enemy encirclement attempt by 9 A.M. and then dug in to prepare for more trouble. With the mounting of enemy mortar and artillery fire against the battalion, it was decided to halt the 3rd's drive against Gressenich until the battalion could obtain protection for its exposed right flank.

Other sections of the wooded front began to feel the weight of the enemy's drive as well. At 7:30 A.M. enemy infantry and vehicles in large numbers were discovered by a 2nd Battalion patrol to be coming down the wide, open draw which stretches between Gressenich and Mausbach. Quick action by Staff Sergeant Harold Hellerick at Krewinkle enabled the forward elements of the battalion to massacre the Germans—only 10 of an estimated 200 enemy soldiers were known to have left the battlefield alive! Later sorties against the 2nd met equally resolute resistance from the doughboys.

In the meantime, the 1st Battalion was ordered to occupy the high ground southeast of Gressenich at 8:30 A.M.—so as to place the 1st between the 2nd and 3rd, with one rifle and one anti-tank platoon left by the 1st to hold Mausbach. By 10:40 A.M. the 1st was digging in on top of its assigned hill. At noon Company *C,* which had been operating at one-third strength or less until the day previous, was dispatched back to reinforce the holding of Mausbach. Later in the day the 3rd Armored Division attempted to aid the 2nd Battalion with nine tanks, but 170mm German artillery fire forced this supporting armor to withdraw. By now the enemy had increased his artillery and mortar fire and was waging his old type of stubborn defensive.

Despite counterattacks the 47th Infantry had accomplished the Ninth's first major mission of the Battle for Germany. In the operations of September 17, 1944, the *Raiders* had become the first Allied unit to pierce completely the *Siegfried Line,* when they cut through the final maze of fortifications near Schevenhuette! What had taken the German nation many years to construct had been breached by the 47th C.T. in a little over three days!

* * * *

BY NIGHT of September 17th the final position of the *Siegfried* had been cut at Schevenhuette and the second position had been overrun between Mausbach and Zweifall by the *Raiders.* The *Go-Devils* had penetrated the first position at Hoefen. Logically, it seemed as though the enemy would attempt to restore the line, for the action of the *Raiders* aided greatly in the American drive on Aachen and Stolberg, having cleared the southern approaches to these German strongholds.

Throughout the 17th, both the 39th and the 60th had encountered the same hot reception which had characterized the enemy engagements with the 47th. The *Go-Devil* 3rd Battalion received an enemy counterattack as early as thirty minutes after midnight on the 17th; and whereas there reigned some initial confusion and many casualties, the enemy was repelled completely by 11 A.M.—ten and one-half hours later. The 1st Battalion, meanwhile, opened an attack on Alzen against a wall of fire, while the 2nd Battalion moved upon Hoefen.

For Colonel Bond and his 39th C.T. it was an extension of the rugged fighting which had been the lot of the *Falcons* during the preceding twenty-four hours. Counterattack followed counterattack as the Germans attempted to halt the 39th. As September 18th broke out of the east the regiment continued its mission of reducing fortifications. Anti-tank obstacles and mine fields held up the advance, but the 39th smashed forward relentlessly, destroying 11 more pillboxes and capturing many prisoners in a day of bitter fighting.

Roadblocks, anti-tank obstacles, mine fields and a more persistent enemy stand held up the advance for the other combat units of the Ninth on this day as well. German harassing patrols and heavy artillery backed the Nazi effort to eject the American invaders from the soil of Hitler's *sacred Fatherland.* Blood flowed down the hills and ravines bounding Mausbach, Monschau, Alzen, Hoefen, Zweifall, Gressenich, Lammersdorf and Paustenbach—as possession of key points see-sawed back and forth between the battle fortunes of American and German infantry and heavy firepower. Against the supposed strongest positions of the west, one division had broken through completely by September 17th—the Ninth. Furthermore, the line of this one unit stretched for fourteen miles . . . and on several occasions to twenty-eight!

The thinly spread infantrymen of the Ninth Division were required to use their areas to the best advantage. On the 18th the 47th was still under fire and holding against small counterattacks of infantrymen backed by bazookas, flame-throwers, hand grenades and a continuation of the shelling begun on the day previous. One group of *Raiders* was ordered to withdraw 1,000 meters in order to get out of the impact area and reorganize. At the same time the 39th's 1st Battalion (less Company *A*) rushed to reinforce the 47th near Zweifall. But any fears of insecurity in this region soon proved to be unfounded, for the footsloggers up front had the situation under control.

Southward along the rim of the Monschau Forest another battle was taking place as the 60th C.T. drove further into Germany. The 60th had followed a ten-minute preparation of artillery and approaching the enemy fortifications at Alzen from the rear, brought heavy fire on all points of resistance. By nightfall the *Go-Devils* had captured and fully organized Alzen against counterattack; and the complete success of this envelopment was shown in the bag of 154 prisoners who fell captive to the regiment.

* * * *

IT SEEMED that the troops of the *First Team* were on the threshold of a great victory, one which would carry them far to the east. Aachen was in the jaws of a double envelopment, Stolberg and the regions to the south were almost completely in American hands and the Ninth Division had cleared the last permanent-type fortifications between Schevenhuette and Dueren. The *Siegfried* had been caught off balance and the fruits of victory were there for the asking . . . or so it appeared.

But at this time the grave crisis in supply had become so bad as to force General Eisenhower and his staff to make a weighty decision. Lines of communication were at the breaking point. Only in the VII Corps sector had a deep advance into Germany been accomplished, and this in a forested mountain zone which was not favorable for large-scale armor drives such as were necessary for victory in 1944. The supply of fuel and ammunition already was rationed, and until the port of Antwerp was taken and rehabilitated would so remain.

It was decided that the fuel and ammunition should go to that portion of the huge front where a smashing Allied victory was possible, and that the port of Antwerp should be taken soon after this drive had begun. The area most likely to offer success appeared that to the north, where the flat terrain favored mechanized advance. Moreover, capture of this area which lay beyond the Rhine River meant outflanking the *Siegfried* line and placing the Allied armies along the most logical and most direct road to Berlin. It was a bold move, one which was designed to catch the enemy totally off balance and to trap a large number of his troops along the western seaboard.

This decision had far-reaching consequences; for it allowed the remaining armies to the south to make only minor advances, while the British First Army and the Canadian Second Army in coordination with the Allied Airborne Command (which included the U.S. 82nd and 101st Airborne Division) made the major thrust.

Enemy reinforcements and bad weather caused this operation to be something less than successful. However, the great harbor of Antwerp was captured by November 6th because of this drive and became reoperative twenty days later. In addition, it placed the command of General Eisenhower in a position to launch a smashing offensive once supplies were back to normal.

The new strategy of the Allied high command dictated the actions of the Ninth Division after September 17th. With the main effort against the Nazis directed to the north, General Collins was ordered to halt the smashing drive of his VII Corps and to concentrate upon consolidation of the frontier regions. It was a hard command to give, but one which was necessary.

Thus changed the swift course of events which had placed the Ninth Infantry Division in a position

KIBITZING

of spearheading the American thrust through the *Siegfried* and to the east. With the American consolidation came a build-up of German defenses and a stubborn stiffening of resistance. As this opposition was mounting continuously, the plans of September 19th called for regrouping the 39th and 60th C.T.'s and retaining the 47th Infantry in its positions defending the right flank of the VII Corps from the north, northwest and northeast. The Monschau-Konzen area on the Division's southern flank was held by the newly organized Task Force *Tincher*. The going was to be tougher now.

* * * *

In the battle-scarred town of Roetgen, Archbishop (Cardinal) Francis J. Spellman gave Communion to the men of the Ninth Infantry Division on September 20th. It was the first church service held for American troops in Germany.

AS THE consolidation phase began for the Ninth Division, the *Wehrmacht* speeded up reinforcements in an attempt to regain its lost positions. Roadblocks hindered the Division's path, long-range guns hurled their loads upon the Ninth. Yet progress was made in the form of reduced pillboxes and captured troops, as the infantrymen of the Ninth inched forward and strengthened their lines.

Heavy plunging fire fell upon the 39th C.T. on the 21st, and on that same day Lt. Colonel Donald Clayman, commanding the 47th's 3rd Battalion, requested military government officials to evacuate residents from Schevenhuette, since there were so many civilian casualties from German shelling in that forest town.

Enemy fortifications in the vicinity of Rollesbroich, Lammersdorf and Paustenbach were the target of the 39th C.T., as it erupted forth on September 22nd to destroy many emplacements and capture 125 P.W.'s in another day of rugged fighting. So strong became enemy resistance that an air mission was flown against German installations at Bickerath.

Enemy troops were busy elsewhere, too. On the northeastern flank, German infantry launched its strongest counterattack of the breach against the 47th Infantry's 3rd Battalion, in what proved to be an all-out attempt to win back the *West Wall* defenses in that region. In planning and in execution, this attack was like that of the well-knit enemy offensives of Normandy. First the Germans staged a small-arms attack at 5:30 A.M., followed by another fifteen minutes later. Both of these came from the north and were designed to distract the 3rd Battalion from the main route of attack. Just prior to 6 A.M. the heaviest and most devastating artillery attack ever to hit the 3rd Battalion began to fall. It was the massed concentration of seventeen 150mm howitzers, nine 105mm howitzers, many 120mm and 80mm mortars, as well as several huge 210mm rifles which were "on call"! The barrage rolled back slowly, beginning at the forward positions held by Company *L* and reaching the battalion command post area about one kilometer southeast of Schevenhuette.

Fifteen minutes after the withering concentrations began leaving the German lines the enemy bombardment stopped. It had been so destructive that wire communications were destroyed completely and many radios were rendered useless.

With the cessation of the barrage came a strong infantry assault launched by the German 48th Infantry Regiment from the east. At 6:30 A.M. the right flank positions of Company *L* were overrun and the enemy was knifing back toward the battalion command post. Aid was asked of regiment and this plea was relayed to General Craig who ordered the 60th's 3rd Battalion to stand by.

Company *L's* 3rd Platoon was cut off from the rest of the battalion as the 1st Platoon withdrew on its right, but the 3rd Platoon held fast under the leadership of Technical Sergeant (First Lieutenant) William J. De Grasse after its platoon leader, Lt. Silliman became wounded seriously. Through the courageous action of Staff Sergeant William D. Clark, who although wounded in both legs kept the enemy at bay, the enemy drive was halted temporarily.

Many other examples of bravery enabled the platoon to hold its lines while inflicting heavy cas-

BATTERED SCHEVENHUETTE

Café zum Scheve von Bernhard Sheil
Weine
Limonade
Schnitt...
Zigaretten
Kaffee
Milch
Gebäck
Eis

ualties upon the larger enemy forces. One of the most outstanding was that of Sergeant Albert D. Moses, Jr. who, after running 150 yards through the path of enemy fire to bring 1,000 rounds of vitally needed ammunition to his platoon, risked his life by dashing across an open field under a "hail of intense fire" to drag his wounded platoon leader to a position of safety. Sergeant Moses was killed in this attempt.

The short but valorous stand of the 3rd Platoon was reinforced at 7 A.M. Attacking northeast across the valley was a platoon of Company *I,* and this additional force restored the positions of Company *L.*

While the men of Company *L* were holding against one element of the German 48th Infantry, that regiment made another thrust at the exposed flank of the 3rd Battalion near Schevenhuette. An engineer platoon and one platoon of the 47th Cannon Company were located here. Enemy machine guns opened up and forced the cannoneers to abandon temporarily their howitzers (after first removing the breech blocks), and the engineers and cannon company troops grabbed their small arms to fight as infantry.

By now the enemy had moved north into the town of Schevenhuette itself. A rugged retort awaited the Germans from the engineer and cannon company machine guns, which fairly butchered the enemy. Kitchen personnel and troops from battalion headquarters joined the battle, causing the enemy to become disorganized. Tanks of the 746th Tank Battalion and self-propelled weapons of the 899th Tank Destroyer Battalion roamed up and down the main street, killing Germans on sight . . . in typical *Wild West* style.

Significant of this brave group was Technician Fifth Grade Paul A. Ilves of the 15th Engineers, who manned a machine gun to halt a flanking attack. Corporal Ilves was firing only twenty yards from the advancing enemy when his gun jammed. He drove the enemy off with rifle fire, fixed his machine gun and took up the fire again.

Further casualties were inflicted upon the amazed enemy troops as the *Raiders* counterattacked furiously, driving some remnants into the woods and killing those who remained nearby. At 9 A.M. any Germans still alive were either prisoners or were those who had fled. The battalion counted noses and found it had lost 13 killed and 34 wounded. Surveys showed that the enemy casualties had been much higher. In the town of Schevenhuette alone, 135 Germans of the 48th Infantry Regiment had died for their *Fuehrer,* a score more were known to have been killed, 34 enemy wounded had been evacuated by the battalion and over 45 prisoners were returned to the Ninth Division's cage. Uncountable Germans had been killed by the 3rd Battalion's mortars and artillery attachments . . . nobody knew just how many. Thus ended for a time the attempts of German foot soldiers to seize Schevenhuette in a counter-offensive.

German artillery continued to shell the town, however, in an effort to dislodge the 3rd Battalion. 'Midst falling rubble that was once a town, both the *Raiders* and the church across the street from *Cafe von Bernhard Stiel* stood defiant against the rain of death.

* * * *

THE remainder of September was characterized by equally rough fighting and a strenuous effort on the part of the enemy to halt the Ninth. Even if he could not hold the Ninth, he was determined to contest bitterly and counterattack each emplacement taken by Divisional units. Pillboxes continued to be defended tenaciously, both from within the fortifications themselves and from field positions thrown up in their vicinity. Growth of all sorts covered the concrete, bearing witness to the fact that these emplacements had been used little during the *Nazi Era of Domination* in Europe. This natural camouflage, on the other hand, aided the defenders. Added to the roadblocks and natural obstacles which were covered by machine-gun and artillery fire and anti-personnel and anti-tank mines, the foe had a well-coordinated system for stopping further advances.

It was in this inch-contesting struggle of the pillboxes that the magnificent work of the engineers became apparent. Throughout the attack against the *Siegfried*, the 15th Engineer Combat Battalion performed an amazing job in the destruction of fortifications. With dynamite strapped to their backs, engineers frequently were in the thick of the fight. Time after time they used flame-throwers to compel early surrender of emplacements—thus saving the lives of countless infantrymen.

Over mine fields, where every step might mean certain death, the 15th lost its men clearing the way for others. Although not authorized the *Combat Infantryman's Badge*, engineers knew that their buddies with the crossed rifles felt mighty happy to have them as fighting partners.

Distinguished Unit Citation

The *15th Engineer Combat Battalion* is cited for extraordinary heroism and outstanding performance of duty in action during the period 14 September to 23 October 1944 in Germany. On 14 September 1944 the *15th Engineer Combat Battalion* entered Germany at Rotgen as divisional engineers of the 9th Infantry Division whose mission was the breaching of the Siegfried Line in the vicinity of the Hurtgen and Monschau Forests. The *15th Engineer Combat Battalion* was assigned the mission of aiding in the assault of the strongly held reinforced concrete pillboxes and bunkers with flame throwers and explosive charges and in addition, was charged with rendering these massive fortifications useless following their capture. Despite adverse, atrocious weather conditions and heavy mortar, artillery, and small-arms fire, the *15th Engineer Combat Battalion* carried on its task with the utmost determination and regardless of casualties brought it to a successful conclusion. Owing to the extended division front which at that time was 28 miles, infiltrations by enemy units were frequent and fierce fire fights were daily occurrences between engineer personnel and the enemy. On 16 September 1944 the battalion bridged the Roer River at Monschau, the first bridge across that turbulent stream, while at Lammersdorf, Monschau, Zweifall, Vicht, Schevenhutte, Gressenich, Germeter, and in the heavily wooded and fortified Hurtgen Forest the minefields and dragons teeth obstacles of the Siegfried Line were breached and pillbox after pillbox assaulted and neutralized under the heaviest kinds of enemy fire. During this period 125 of these fortified positions were neutralized and at the same time 1,352 mines and 88 abatis were removed, many of which were booby trapped. The work of the *15th Engineer Combat Battalion* during this time was in a large degree instrumental in the successful accomplishment of the division's mission.

What happened to one pillbox facing Company *K* of the 39th Infantry illustrates both the kind of battle waged by the Nazi soldiers and the coordination rendered by the 15th Engineers. It was on September 23rd that a particularly vicious group of Germans was encountered by Company *K* in the Lammersdorf sector . . . defending a concrete structure. This pillbox was built so well that it required artillery, anti-tank rockets, smoke, 24 pounds of dynamite, detonation of 18 *Teller* mines and 400 pounds of TNT to force its 38 occupants to surrender . . . and then only after twelve hours of incessant pounding! When the emplacement's defenders surrendered finally, they had broken eardrums and were suffering from severe shock.

While the men of Company *K* were having their experiences at the stubborn pillbox, Company *G* of the 39th oozed forward against a pugnacious enemy line to capture 25 prisoners and the forest strongpoint at Jagerhaus. The 47th Infantry, in the meantime, consolidated its positions against mine and booby-trap obstacles, while the 60th advanced slowly against local counterattacks.

More and more German reinforcements poured into the gaps now, and the forest battleground assumed a more dangerous aspect to the doughboys. Every gain made by the Ninth was met with artillery barrages and counterattacks by the enemy—usually in the strength of one battalion.

September 25th showed the manner in which the defense of the German frontier had tightened. The Ninth still was trying to capture the fortifications in the Rollesbroich-Lammersdorf-Paustenbach areas as its primary objective. Action in this region, however, had been slowed down to patrolling. To the north the 60th was encountering heavy fighting in what was a temporary reverse for the regiment. A strong enemy force counterattacked the 1st Battalion area and two pillboxes were retaken along with forty men of Company *A*. It was now that the 1st Battalion "got up its dander" and regained the positions. During its counterattack the battalion met elements of the 60th's 3rd Battalion, which had self-propelled gun support, and by nightfall this combination had repulsed the Germans and inflicted heavy losses. *Go-*

Devil lines were moved forward and the Monschau area remained in 60th hands.

For the next few days tanks and infantry in strength met the advance of the Ninth as the Division made minor gains along the line. Additional support came on the 28th when the 297th Engineer Combat Battalion was attached to the Division; and this welcome reinforcement was moved to protect the gap between the 39th and 47th Infantries.

While the enemy continued his stubborn pillbox-by-pillbox defense the Division coordinated with bombers of the air force in clearing a route of attack toward Bickerath. Heavy supporting weapons pounded the fortifications in front of the 39th, while the 60th C.T. made a diversionary attack. As usual the defenders counterattacked—and as usual the *AAA-O* 39th C.T. repulsed their effort.

The slowdown along the *Siegfried* allowed supplies to catch up with the VII Corps dumps and through careful planning a sufficient cache of gasoline, food and ammunition was put aside for a large scale, though limited, offensive. This drive was to prove one of the most costly of the Ninth's many campaigns.

* * * *

OCTOBER, rainy weather and a concerted First Army drive against both the Roer dams and the ancient Holy Roman Empire capital of Aachen were at hand. Mud mired down jeeps and the weary legs of men on the line; keeping comfortable and dry became a problem. Back at *APO 9*, ballots were received for the first participation of overseas fighting men in a wartime Federal election. Certainly no one had more right to vote than these American footsloggers—standing in the shadow of death seven days and seven nights each week!

Murky October found the Division holding a line from the road junction town of Mausbach, northeast to battered Schevenhuette, thence south through the forests east of Roetgen and Lammersdorf and continuing to the region of Monschau. The 47th Infantry was to the north, the 39th held (and held superbly) the center near Lammersdorf, and Monschau was the focal point for operations of the 60th. In accordance with orders issued by the Corps commander on September 30th, the Ninth was to maintain its positions along this line and regroup its forces prior to an attack upon enemy defenses at Schmidt and Vossenack.

Although other divisions of First Army fought in the Hurtgen Forest or on the fringes of the forest, the 9th, 28th, and 4th Infantry Divisions bore the brunt of the fighting.

. . . . To indicate the severity of this type of fighting the battle casualties of the three divisions during their period in the Hurtgen Forest are tabulated below:

9th Inf Div (13 Sep-26 Oct)	3,836
28th Inf Div (27 Oct-20 Nov)	3,611
4th Inf Div (6 Nov- 8 Dec)	5,260
Total casualties for 99 days	12,707

—*First Army Report of Operations*

Progressive relief of Division units in the Monschau-Lammersdorf vicinity by the 4th Cavalry Group began on October 2nd, and although the enemy took this movement as a signal for a strong counterattack, the changeover was completed successfully. Nightfall of October 4th found both the 39th and 60th Combat Teams positioned in their new areas and awaiting the attack order. Preparations were completed for an advance to the southeast by the two regiments, while the 47th C.T. remained in position protecting the Division left flank and carrying on day and night patrols. In addition, a battalion of Corps artillery was moved in to hold a three-mile "wood line" between the 47th and 39th Regiments.

Initial objectives of the Division were Germeter and Vossenack, with a southward drive over the high ground beyond the Germeter-Huertgen road. The attack would continue through the Heurtgen Forest and have its finale with the clearing and seizing of the Schmidt-Steckenborn ridge. Final goal of the VII Corps was seizure and control of the vital Roer dams, a mission which had to precede any successful drive east for the First Army . . . since the enemy controlled the flood gates of the Roer River by holding these dams.

The terrain over which the Ninth was to advance was as difficult as soldiers could find anywhere. It is almost impossible to describe accurately the ominous feeling emanating from that thickly vegetated region. Here was the hazardous Huertgen Forest—dark, forbidding, frightening and filled with an enemy who remained unseen much of the time. Here was a high, steep ground—a muddy lowland woods, a damp cemetery for hope and a battleground whose fortifications, draws and trails spelled certain death to unwary trespassers. There was a new type of death or wound—from tree bursts—and it was necessary to dig log-covered shelters and stay up against trees during shelling. Artillery and mortar observers had difficulty in adjusting their fires because of the density of trees: evacuation of wounded and prisoners from the front lines was hazardous, and messengers took their lives in their hands during the hours of darkness. Men could not travel alone safely at any time; guns stayed at ready positions. And that was not all.

It was hard to find good positions for automatic weapons, although the close-in fighting called for increased use of automatic rifles and sub-machine guns. Last-ditch German defenders took excellent advantage of the ground and of non-metallic—undetectable—mines to exact a large toll of American casualties. With adverse weather conditions and the impossibility of continued and accurate artillery or air support, many soldiers felt as if they were fighting in the dark. Each infantryman, moreover, was on his own. More than at any other time, GIs and officers experienced the tension and strained nerves which make men victims of *combat fatigue.*

The importance of the mission assigned the Ninth Division meant that the Huertgen defenses would have to be breached regardless of the cost. During the last VII Corps offensive the Ninth had cut completely through the *Siegfried* five days after receipt of its orders in Belgium. It was with this same spirit that the Division pushed into the Huertgen. Casualties were enormous, however; for during the month of October alone, the Ninth sustained a loss over 30% wounded and killed, while Colonel Gibney's 60th Infantry Regiment ended the period with almost 100% turnover in combat personnel since September 1st!

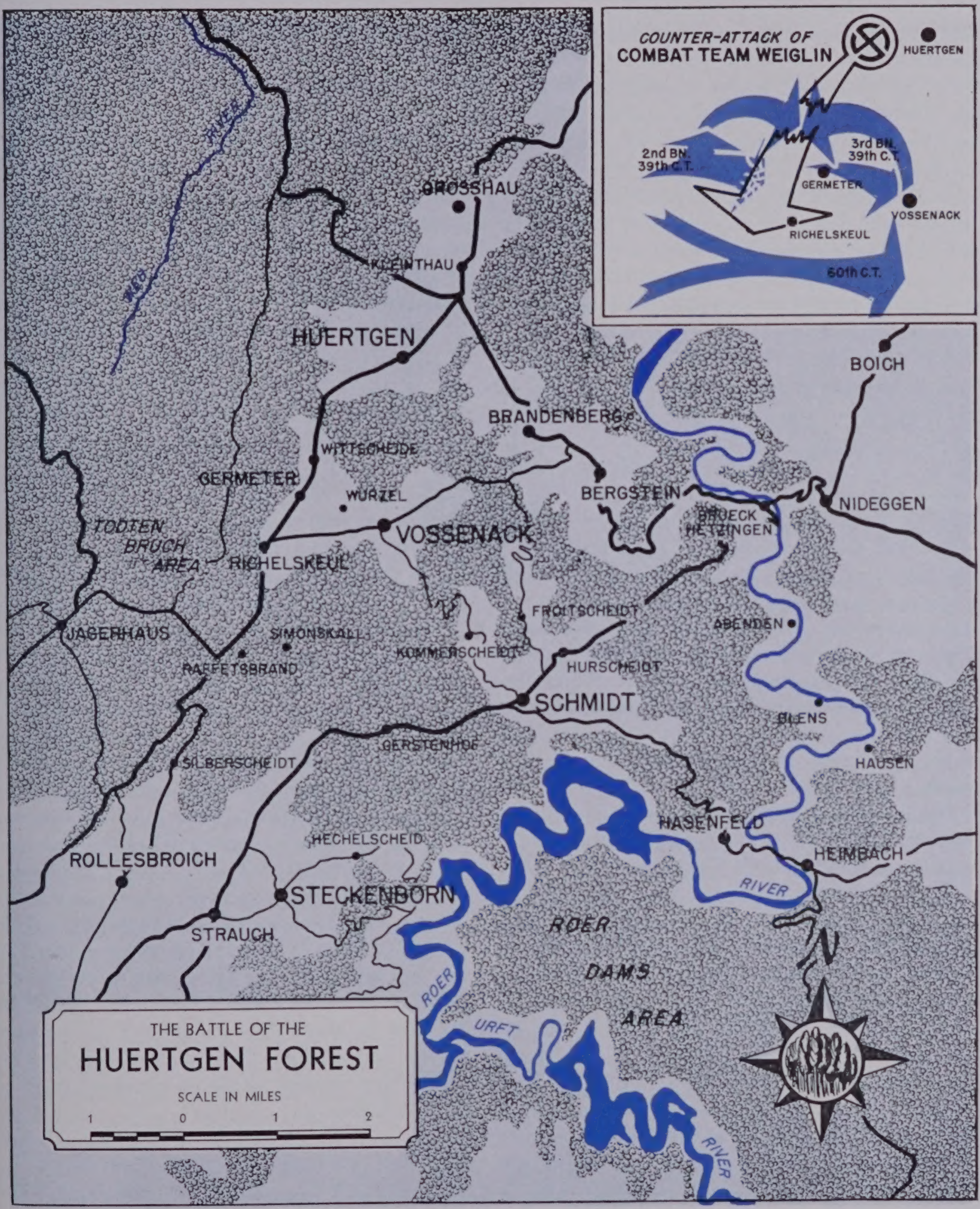
* * * *

On October 6th, Maj. Gen. Louis A. Craig's 9th Inf. Division began a battle which was to prove one of the bloodiest of the war in Europe and which was to go on for four months—the battle for the Roer River dams. As long as these dams were held by the enemy, they were a constant threat to any attempt at crossing the Roer River, for by destroying the main dam, sufficient water could be released to flood the Roer Valley, blocking our crossing or isolating whatever troops might be across the river when the dam was blown. The threat of this mass of water had been worked into the German defensive plans for the area, and the fury and tenacity of the defense of the dam area bears witness to the importance they placed on holding the advantage of the situation.

—Mission Accomplished

FIGHTER-BOMBER support zoomed over to smash at the German strongpoints at 9:30 A.M. on October 6th, and this air strike was followed by the artillery battalions of the Ninth throwing over their 11:20 A.M. preparation. Ten minutes later the infantry was underway . . . assaulting massive fog-ridden fortifications in the densely wooded hills of the Huertgen—this, too, was the *West Wall* of the *Reich.*

An obstacle course of pillboxes, roadblocks and tied-in field defenses slowed down the advance of the 39th Infantry as it shoved off to the northeast. At the same time, the 60th moved against the enemy with fairly good speed—initially. The 2nd Battalion led off on the *Go-Devils* left flank and the 1st followed slightly to the right rear. When the 2nd reached within 1,000 yards of its objective, a sheet of small-arms fire poured forth from prepared positions, while overhead flew the lethal artillery and mortar support of the enemy. The 1st Battalion ran into trouble when it reached a wired-in area on the right flank and was forced to change to an enveloping move. Meanwhile, the 3rd Battalion launched a diversionary attack to relieve the situation, but ran into heavy opposition as it moved east. By nightfall the drive halted temporarily, with the leading 2nd Battalion holding a north-south line across an exceptionally wide firebreak in the Todten


COUNTER-ATTACK OF
COMBAT TEAM WEIGLIN
HUERTGEN
2nd BN.
39th C.T.
3rd BN.
39th C.T.
GERMETER
VOSSENACK
RICHELSKEUL
60th C.T.
WEB RIVER
GROSSHAU
KLEINTHAU
HUERTGEN
BRANDENBERG
WITTSCHEIDE
GERMETER
WURZEL
BERGSTEIN
BOICH
NIDEGGEN
BRUECK
HETZINGEN
VOSSENACK
TODTEN BRUCH AREA
RICHELSKEUL
FROITSCHEIDT
ABENDEN
JAGERHAUS
SIMONSKALL
RAFFETSBRAND
KOMMERSCHEIDT
HURSCHEIDT
SCHMIDT
BLENS
GERSTENHOF
SILBERSCHEIDT
HAUSEN
HASENFELD
HECHELSCHEID
HEIMBACH
ROLLESBROICH
STECKENBORN
RIVER
STRAUCH
ROER
DAMS
AREA
ROER
URFT
RIVER
THE BATTLE OF THE
HUERTGEN FOREST
SCALE IN MILES
1 0 1 2

Bruch area—some 1,000 yards southwest of Germeter.

During the night and early morning that followed the *Falcons* received considerable shelling and were met with tenacious resistance at each pillbox. Heavy small-arms, mortar and long range artillery fire continued throughout the day, and the regiment found an increasing number of mines blocking its path. The firebreaks were infested with mines and covered by tied-in fires, which added to roadblocks made the bringing up of urgently needed tanks and tank destroyers impossible.

The other prong of the Ninth's attack simultaneously was finding that the battle for Germeter had begun in earnest. After repulsing an early morning counterattack, the 60th Infantry jumped off into intense automatic weapons fire and over extensive mine fields. The 1st Battalion attempted to secure the main road running south from Germeter, but the enemy waged a desperate defensive with every weapon and trick at his disposal. Tanks were the real need at this time, since heavy firepower alone could silence many of the enemy's fortifications. For that reason, mine clearing details swept out anti-personnel and anti-tank explosives, making a path over which both troops and tanks were able to advance and knock out emplacements.

Several changes in command took place while the battle of the Huertgen and the Roer dams was underway, including three of great importance to the strategy of the Division. Colonel Hammond D. Birks was assigned to the duty of assistant Division commander to replace Colonel James S. Rodwell on October 7th. The husky and efficient Colonel Birks soon became a brigadier general and showed an unusual ability in getting up front where the roughest action was taking place. Two days after Colonel Birks was ordered to the Ninth, straight-forward Colonel John G. Van Houten became commanding officer of the 60th Infantry. His permanent successor as Division chief of staff was the athletic and affable Colonel William C. Westmoreland, who at the age of 30 already had been C.O. of the 34th Field Artillery and executive officer of Divarty.

The course of the battle for Germeter swayed back and forth. Footsloggers of the 39th tried to cut the north-south road north of Germeter, but moved forward slowly against mounting opposition. Meanwhile, the 60th attempted to cut that road south of the town. Both the *Go-Devil* 1st and 2nd Battalions were counterattacked many times and a rough fight ensued. With tanks and tank destroyers to aid them, the *Go-Devils* made some progress . . . despite a preponderance of wire obstacles.

During the night of October 9th the enemy infiltrated between the two left platoons of Company *I* and the remainder of the 39th 3rd Battalion. This cut off one platoon and the Germans succeeded in killing, wounding or capturing all but a few men. To re-establish the push it was necessary to clear out the Nazis in house-to-house fighting. The battle still was going on in the morning and ended with the capture of 58 enemy troops. As this engagement was in progress, the 47th Infantry delivered a diversionary attack on the northern (left) flank.

Most successful attack of the day was launched by the 1st Battalion of the 60th. The 60th Infantry had received support from an artillery preparation prior to jumping off. Then, in a magnificent maneuver the 1st Battalion changed its direction of advance and moved 2,000 yards on the vital Germeter-Rollesbroich road junction at Richelskeul. Taking a total of more prisoners than they had men present for duty in their own battalion, Lt. Colonel Lee W. Chatfield's fighting outfit forced the Germans to issue one of the first retreat orders directed by the *Wehrmacht* inside of Germany. By 6 P.M. the road junction and its vicinity were in possession of the 1st Battalion. This action was instrumental in stopping the flow of German supplies traveling toward Aachen.

But the Germans were not beaten by one retreat directive. The Roer dams meant the key to the Rhineland and possession of the Rhineland meant entry to Germany's heart. With terrain to their advantage the reconstituted German Seventh Army held on. The enemy threatened to flood the dams . . . he attacked lines of communications . . . he sallied forth in ceaseless countermotion after each lost position.

And the foe had excellent artillery support. German shells ended in horrible tree-burst ricochets flaming into foxholes and unbuttoned turrets of the Ninth's supporting armor. Firebreaks offered the only sizable maneuver area, and here tanks and tank destroyers were canalized into terrific pre-arranged fires when they attempted to avoid wooded density. Destroyers of the 899th T.D.'s fought across one 1,000-yard firebreak six times. The gap see-sawed back and forth between the Americans and Germans until the 899th vehicles fired point blank into the enemy.

* * * *

THE four-day period beginning October 11th saw the drive of the Ninth turn into a slow, bloody struggle which featured ever-mounting casualties. Each day the line of communications was threatened more seriously, and each day the defending force counterattacked as though they were fighting their last battle and wanted to make it a memorable one. On the 11th the 39th Infantry ran into a mountain of trouble while moving toward Vossenack. Heavy fire from the enemy positions cost the regiment several of its supporting tanks and the 3rd Battalion was sent on a flanking attack through the draw north of Vossenack after the 1st Battalion had reached an impasse. Elsewhere the 60th Infantry spent the day dealing with many German patrols which attempted to infiltrate their positions, and dodging harassing artillery and mortar fire.

While this battle was in progress, General George C. Marshall, Army Chief of Staff, visited the battle-seasoned troops of the Ninth and their fighting general on Columbus Day—October 12th.

Early on October 12th the 39th Infantry received a powerful counterattack from Combat Team *Weiglin*, a first line outfit composed of highly-decorated combat veterans which had been rushed to the line with the mission of halting the Ninth's drive on the Roer dams. C.T. *Weiglin's* thrust touched off one of the most important battles fought in the Huertgen Forest, an engagement which except for the amazing and gallant maneuvering of the 39th might have culminated in the almost total destruction of that regiment, the 60th Infantry and Division headquarters.

At first the Germans came down a draw which runs parallel to the Germeter-Huertgen road, and with heavy mortar and artillery fire were able to push back Company *G* to a secondary road some distance to the rear. Leading enemy elements infiltrated around the 2nd Battalion's western (left) flank, but Company *G* regrouped and stopped the enemy while Company *F* held against attacks at an important roadblock.

Although the main force of this drive initially struck at the 2nd Battalion it was, to quote 39th Regimental commander Colonel Bond, ". . . aimed on the left rear exposed flank and designed to cut off the 3rd Battalion who had crossed the Germeter-Huertgen road and had patrols in the far edge of Vossenack."

By now, a desperate fight had developed on the left flank and sensing the importance and imminent danger of this attack, the 39th's commander ordered a most difficult but highly successful maneuver. Again his words tell the story best:

> *The unique part of this battle was that when the 2nd Battalion was first attacked, the 3rd Battalion of the 39th Infantry which had patrols in Vossenack had to turn completely around and attack toward their rear. Also, one company of the 1st Battalion, which was on the right south flank, had to change direction from the east to the north.*

As the fighting *AAA-O* halted the counterattack by hitting it on the flank in its turn, the enemy found himself in a most unhealthy situation. Colonel

Weiglin, German combat team commander was killed, the enemy sector commander was wounded severely and C.T. *Weiglin* itself suffered heavy losses. By Friday the 13th, the 39th had launched attacks to restore the territory it had lost, and despite vigorous enemy counterthrusts was able to regain all ground by Saturday. Combat Team *Weiglin* lost two battalions and had to be reinforced by a reserve battalion to prevent complete annihilation of its forces. Thus ended the enemy counterthrust that failed.

While the 39th had its difficulties with the revitalized German infantry, the 60th Regiment was fighting a stiff engagement with a similarly stubborn foe who used automatic weapons to great advantage. At Richelskeul and along the Germeter-Rollesbroich road the 60th repulsed many counterattacks and made local attacks to capture 105 prisoners. *Go-Devils* discovered that a main disadvantage to waging a strong offensive was the enemy's well-prepared positions and dogged tenacity.

It was the same story on the 14th. For although pillboxes continued to be reduced, the main effort of the Ninth had changed from a smashing offensive to an endeavor to hold the line and slowly advance it south.

The only large-scale attack of October 15th was the 7:30 A.M. drive by the 60th's 2nd Battalion, which was supported by a company of tanks. This combination had the mission of seizing the high ground to the south and east and made rapid gains, reaching their objective by 2 P.M. Advance into the objective itself was held up by unyielding enemy positions, which presaged a day of slow pillbox-by-pillbox reduction by the battalion.

SHACK SNACK SNAFU

Men of the 47th Infantry had a working agreement with the Germans opposing them, and everybody was happy until the Jerries double-crossed the doggies. Between the lines there was a house with a cellar full of cheese and beer. American patrols drew their rations during the daytime and the Jerries at night. Since there was enough to go around, neither side fired on the other until the Germans showered the Yanks with mortar-fire one day. The Americans, furious with the display of poor sportsmanship, rearranged the furniture and that night, the house, cheese, beer and Jerries went up in smoke.

—*The Stars and Stripes*

Showers were arranged for the mud-covered men of the 39th Infantry on October 15th, and the 60th Infantry's "Nutmeg Showers" (a captured German trailer outfitted with four showers and a dressing room by regimental S-4 Major Schumaker) washed the dirt off of the "Go-Devils." It went without saying that dry clothing felt good on the weather-beaten bodies of these troops. By now the frontline units of the Ninth were operating on the principle of rotating men to the rear at regular intervals, where they could clean up and obtain a fresh set of clothing.

The Ninth's push to reach the Roer dams reached an impasse on October 16th, and it was more quiet now in the grim, blooded, battlefields of the Huertgen. After this day the Ninth assumed a defensive role, improving positions, laying mines and using fire to determine the location of the enemy. Patrolling continued under sporadic mortar and artillery barrages of the Germans.

Until the 23rd the 60th Infantry, aided by the 2nd Battalion of the 47th, moved slowly against a stonewall defense. This hard and costly work was hindered in part by the fact that the Division had neither enough maneuver space nor sufficient time to accomplish its task of seizing the Schmidt-Steckenborn ridgeline.

* * * *

BY OCTOBER 24th the Ninth Infantry Division was a tired group of fighting men. Casualties had been enormous during its campaign through Germany and the Division was in need of rest and rehabilitation before another major offensive could be undertaken. First Army realized this, and in view of the fact that the Army was renewing its offensive to the east it was decided to give the Ninth a well-earned period off the line. After over four months of continuous combat since the invasion, plans were formulated and orders issued for relief of the Division, less the 47th C.T., and for movement to an assembly area in the vicinity of Camp Elsenborn, Belgium.

SATURDAY NIGHT

The *Raiders* had been in a "quiet" sector during the advance south. Therefore, they and the 294th Engineer Combat Battalion were attached to the 3rd Armored Division when the remainder of the Ninth passed to control of Major General (Lt. General) Leonard T. Gerow's V Corps. Relief begun by elements of the 28th (Keystone State) Infantry Division on October 25th was completed by the following evening and the Ninth headed westward.

Those men still alive after the harrowing months of agonizing advance across France, Belgium and Germany pinched themselves. The Ninth was now at Camp Elsenborn—*Buzz Bomb Alley* . . . so named for those well-remembered coughing, sputtering *V-1's,* the *flying bombs.* Whereas a majority of robot missiles were meant for either Antwerp or Liege, several fell short of their mark, landing in the Elsenborn area. Yet it was rest for the tired doughs, and Elsenborn was infinitely better than the Huertgen!

It remained the Army, however, for with the afternoons of bathing, recreation, Red Cross *Clubmobiles* and nights of movies—there were the mornings of training, rehabilitation and maintenance. And—the usual exchange of battle experiences and indoctrination of reinforcements took place. Ceremonies for presentation of awards and decorations were held by the 39th and 60th Infantries and by Divarty and Special Troops. With these presentations came memories of valiant buddies who would march into battle no more; and there was the ever-present realization that, perhaps, another day would find a large percentage of the participants in these very ceremonies absent as well.

Generals Eisenhower and Bradley paid General Craig a visit at the Division command post (Buetgenbach) on November 5th. However, even as *Ike* was alighting from his car into the mud that was Buetgenbach's streets, the Ninth was moving out under V Corps to relieve the 4th Infantry Division of its sector on the right flank of the Corps front, so as to permit transfer of that division to VII

Corps. Pending the arrival on line of the 99th Infantry Division, which recently had come over from the United Kingdom, the Ninth was to hold this fairly quiet southern sector.

The 4th Division relief was ordered completed by dark of November 6th. Experienced at moving by now, the Ninth Division completed the changeover by 3 P.M. on the 5th. Defenses were organized immediately with patrols discovering snipers and booby traps in front of the line, and doughs finding increasing difficulty in keeping warm in the cold weather. Trenchfoot was making its appearance along the wooded front, too, and shortly would be followed with another boogey—the numbing pains of frostbite.

On November 8th, despite the first snowfall of the season and its attendant frostbitten hands, of big interest to many was, "Who won?" This question was asked more in the rear areas, for it was 1944 and it was national election day back in the States. Wherever there was a radio, wherever there was a courier, that's where several inquisitive *Joes* gathered. To the contrary, Presidential elections were not on the minds of men on patrol in the snow. Those individuals were glad when November 10th arrived and combat teams of the 99th Infantry Division began relieving the Ninth. By November 14th the last Ninth Division unit was relieved and proceeded back to the Camp Elsenborn rest area by way of Bullingen, Buetgenbach and Elsenborn.

For the remainder of November the Division went into Corps reserve . . . with emphasis on training in new tactical methods, the latest weapons, issuance of better clothing and evenings of recreation. The weather was becoming increasingly miserable; roads were more slippery and the value of overshoes increased to foot-soaked GIs.

Rest areas issued many items, but the novel regiment was the 39th. First Lieutenant Bernie *Scoop* Zeitlin furnished the *AAA-O* men with his own *secret weapon—a Finnish steam bath!* After this and an invigorating shower, *Scoop* had fresh clothing

KREWINKEL UNDER SEASON'S FIRST SNOWFALL

awaiting the refreshed doughs. To top it off, the long-awaited beer (ordered in June) arrived and the men had *ICE COLD BEER* drunk to the tune of chattering teeth!

* * * *

THE end of October saw both the fall of Aachen to the VII Corps and the stabilization of the British-Canadian drive to the north. With a consequential build-up of supplies, First Army—along with the other armies of the Allied command—prepared to launch an offensive to the east. General Hodge's command once again was to take up its drive for Dueren and Cologne. The Roer River itself stood as a formidable barrier to any advance. Crossing this swift waterway would be futile without capture of the dams to the south. Thus, although reaching the Roer at Dueren was a major objective, crossing the river had to await capture of the Roer dams.

The Germans knew this, too. After the rapid breaching of the *Siegfried* by the Ninth Infantry Division in September, the enemy devised a new and secondary system of defenses which proved to be excellent. He commandeered the local townsfolk along the frontier and "community digging" of emplacements was begun. Villages and towns became fortified, and by mid-November the *Wehrmacht* was in possession of strong defenses before the Roer River. Concurrently, German artillery interdicted the Schmidt area so well that the important Allied objective of seizing these dams required heroic—and futile—measures on the part of the Americans pushing south.

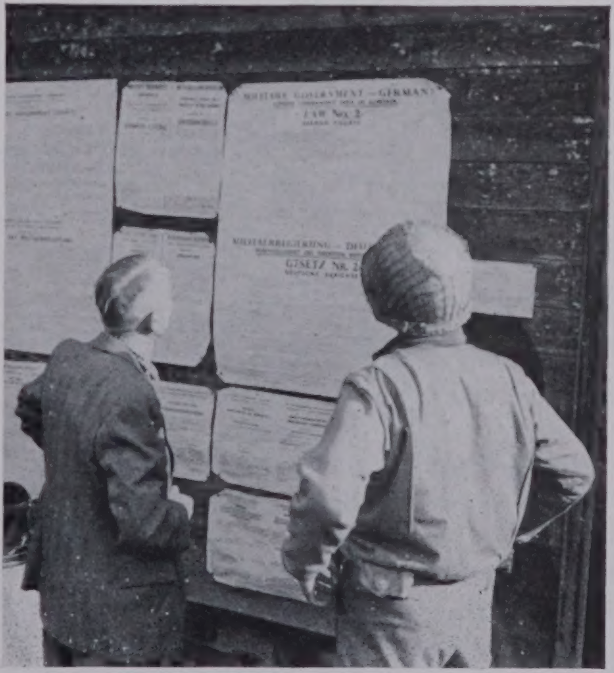
Cold November found the enemy reviving quickly from his manpower shortage and bouncing back into the fight with a *hidden* reserve of seventy *Fortress Battalions,* made up from the remnants of divisions, navy and air force transfers and non-essential workmen. This fresh force, added to the *S.S. Panzer* divisions—Germany's Sunday punch—demonstrated that the foe was far from beaten. He showed, in fact, remarkable recuperative ability—considering that his losses to the western Allies were well over the one-million mark by November.

In the aftermath of the British-Canadian offensive several changes of American corps sectors took place. The addition of the Ninth U.S. Army to the front alongside the First Army was influential in causing even further movements. General Collins' VII Corps was now astride the Aachen-Dueren axis, with General Gerow's V Corps assuming the long front to the south and the attack against the dams. Several additional divisions had joined the First Army and at this time over 3,000,000 Allied soldiers and airmen were facing the enemy in Western Europe.

That was the *big picture*—there was another picture, the actions of the 47th C.T. during November. Colonel George W. Smythe's *Raiders,* it will be remembered, remained with VII Corps when the Ninth became part of V Corps and headed for Camp Elsenborn. On November 10th the combat team completed its short stay with the 3rd Armored and was attached to the 1st Infantry Division. Preparations were made at that time for the 47th to launch an offensive in the near future.

If the last four months of 1944 are filled to excess with stories of the 47th C.T., it is only because that

NEW LAWS FOR THE CONQUERED



MIRED

command found itself in a position to live many of the most hectic and historic days of World War II. For instance, after November 16th some of the bloodiest battles of the war took place in the regiment's sector.

In mentioning the 47th C.T. it is noteworthy to mention the attachments which assisted it. Besides the 47th Infantry there were the 84th Field Artillery Battalion; Company *B*, Ninth Medical Battalion; one platoon of Company *B*, 15th Engineers; Company *C*, 899th T.D. Battalion; Company *A*, 746th Tank Battalion; Company *D*, 87th Chemical (Mortar) Battalion (until November 21st); communications personnel from the Ninth Signal Company and one gun of Battery *D*, 376th AAA (AW) Battalion. These units were as much a part of the battle as the infantry, although they sometimes became lost under the general heading of combat team, regiment or the 47th.

To return to the *big picture*, intelligence sources had indicated that the enemy was not likely to flood the banks of the Roer River from his control dams at the Schmidt headwaters until after a successful crossing in force had been attempted by VII Corps. Thus the advance to the Roer was not believed to entail danger of being inundated by this tremendous mass of water or being cut off from supplies and reinforcements to the rear. The main immediate danger seemed to lie in the enemy's reinforcements and his newly constructed defenses.

* * * *

THE well-calculated offensive which began on November 16, 1944, was based upon the principle of the St. Lo breakthrough. It was preceded by Operation *Q* "the largest scale close-support effort ever flown by the Allied air forces" . . . and there was an extensive and delicately planned scheme which eliminated casualties to friendly troops from their air support.

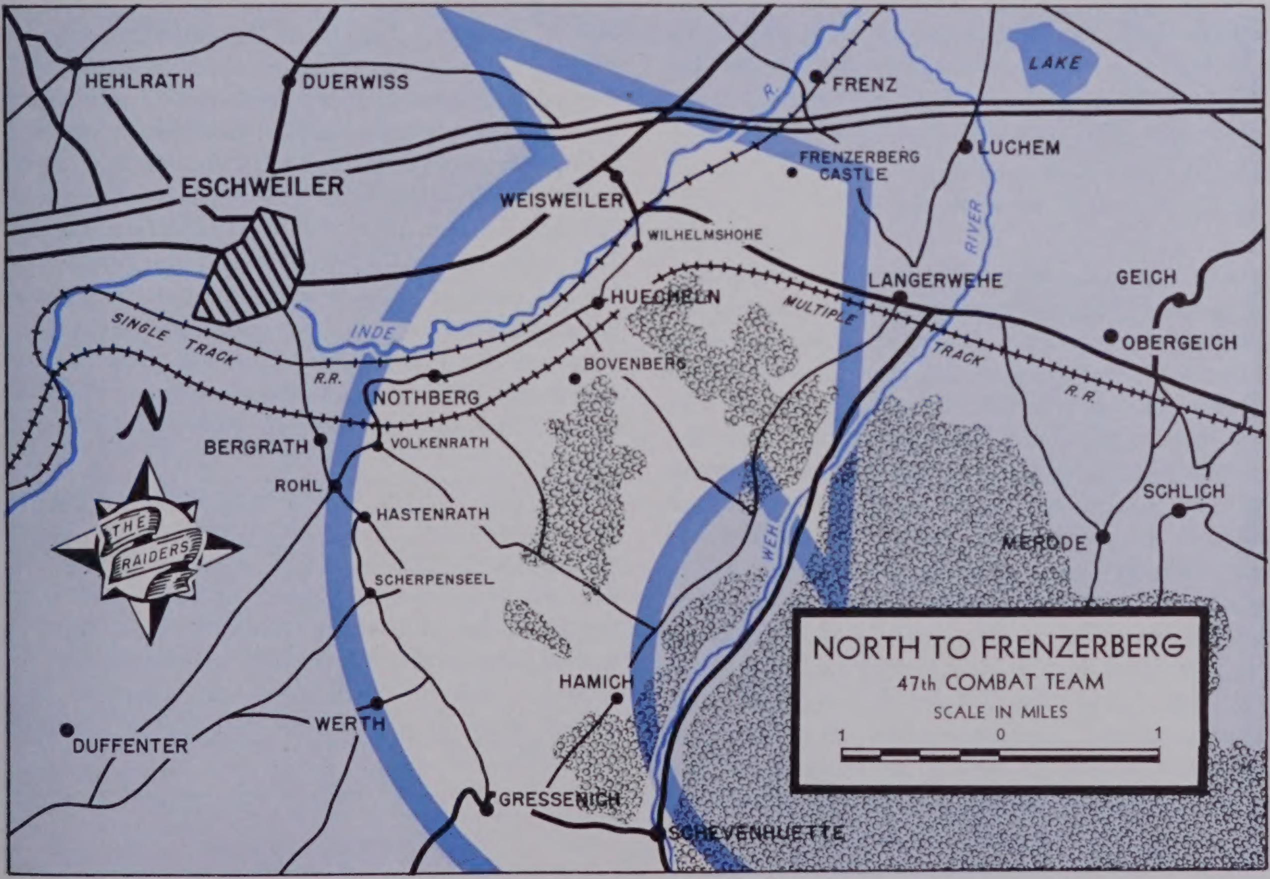
As at St. Lo, the weather was bad for several days. The 11th passed, the 12th, 13th and 14th . . .

flying was out of the question. Then came November 15th and the drive could wait no longer. Air support was ordered for the following day, rain or shine, clouds or visibility zero . . . fog or snow! Infantry was to have attacked on the 15th and was informed that it would jump off twenty-four hours later.

November 16th was awaited eagerly by the planners of Operation Q . . . and by the assaulting ground troops. Morning proved to be cloudy and overcast—then the heavens began to clear as the curtain of clouded denseness gave way to blotches of blue. By 11 A.M. broken clouds hovered over the air force targets at heights of 1,000 to 1,500 feet; visibility was two miles through the hazy fog above that. Each minute brought increasingly better weather and at 11:45 A.M. the 5,000-plane force of the AAF and RAF began roaring through breaks in the sky to begin one of the most devastating bombardments of modern times. Dueren, Juelich, Eschweiler, Weisweiler, Durwiss, Heinsburg and Hehlrath were the recipients of over *twenty million pounds* of aerial bombs—in addition to being subjected to a withering concentration of American artillery and mortar fire. Dueren and Juelich were all but obliterated from the map, while the small fortified villages and towns along the Roer valley regions received similar treatment.

North of the 47th forward positions lay the Eschweiler-Weisweiler regions. To the immediate front was the battered enemy strongpoint of Gressenich. Immediate mission of the regiment was to seize this village and then push on to the area of Nothberg and Huecheln—which is south of Weisweiler on the River Inde. Following that the regiment would smash on and pinch out the 104th Division. The plan was changed somewhat as the battle progressed, but that indicated the direction in which the 47th C.T. was to advance.

Raiders paused temporarily at 12:15 P.M. to watch the spectacle of bombardment which was beginning over Eschweiler and Weisweiler. H-Hour


HEHLRATH
DUERWISS
ESCHWEILER
WEISWEILER
FRENZ
R.
LAKE
FRENZERBERG CASTLE
LUCHEM
RIVER
WILHELMSHOHE
LANGERWEHE
GEICH
HUECHELN
MULTIPLE TRACK R.R.
OBERGEICH
SINGLE TRACK
INDE
R.R.
BOVENBERG
NOTHBERG
N
BERGRATH
VOLKENRATH
ROHL
HASTENRATH
THE RAIDERS
SCHERPENSEEL
SCHLICH
MERODE
WEH
HAMICH
WERTH
DUFFENTER
GRESSENICH
SCHEVENHUETTE
SCALE IN MILES
1
0
1

NORTH TO FRENZERBERG
47th COMBAT TEAM

was 12:45 and at that time the air assault and the supporting artillery of the region stopped to allow the infantry its follow-up attack.

Germans were dazed and had not recovered from the maddening barrage which was their lot as the 1st Battalion led the 47th north toward the well-fortified area of Gressenich. As the 1st Battalion reached the southern edge of the town, however, the enemy recuperated partly from the smashing bombardment and began a determined defensive. Heavy small-arms fire came from within the town itself, as did 88mm shells (from tanks acting as artillery) and the concentrations from self-propelled weapons. The 1st pushed slowly inside the lower rim of Gressenich and began a wicked house-to-house fight for possession of the town. By nightfall Company *K*, 3rd Battalion, succeeded in cutting the road leading northeast of, and about 500 yards from Gressenich, and had placed a roadblock astride the road to halt any German attempt at escape or reinforcement.

Recovering completely by evening from his early morning shock, the enemy waged a battle which was to be typical of his stubborn defensive for the remainder of November. At dusk of November 16th it was clear that Gressenich had to be taken room-by-room.

* * * *

RAIN fell again on the 17th and fell heavily and steadily. The muddy sea beneath the feet of attacking doughboys gave little support for men and less for the armor supporting the offensive. That armor, nonetheless, influenced greatly the battle at Gressenich. With the 3rd Armored grinding out strongly from their positions and the road northeast from that town cut by Company *K*, the enemy was placed in an unenviable position and he began to retreat. The 1st Battalion followed tenaciously at his heels and battled against snipers and delaying action through the debris. By 10:30 A.M. Gressenich was taken and cleared. As soon as enemy artillery crews ascertained that Gressenich had fallen, they began a sporadic shelling of that town and completed the destruction already begun by the Allies.

The scheme of the attack now centered around the 1st Battalion's assaulting and capturing Hills 167 and 187, which dominated the area south of Weisweiler. The 3rd Battalion was to advance to Hill 232 preparatory to its attack against the village of Bovenberg. All, however, depended upon the capture of the high ground, as it did in North Africa, Sicily, France and Belgium.

For several days the 1st Battalion battled against these enemy-held heights; Hill 187 delayed the capture of 167 and both presented a formidable obstacle to the regiment's advance. In a gallant and sustained effort to gain the crests of these hills the 1st Battalion suffered many casualties. Possession of the heights were of essential need for the advance and after their capture the drive resumed momentum.

While the 1st Battalion was earning itself a *Distinguished Unit Citation* in the hills near Hamich, the 3rd Battalion launched a drive from Hill 232 through the dense wooded region to its front and pointed toward Bovenberg. The area proved to be one of the most difficult to penetrate in the history of the regiment. At first the advance was resisted only moderately. But when the battalion came to within 300 yards of its objective the doughboys found themselves trapped by direct flanking fire from either side and a murderous stream of small arms from the front. At the same time a hitherto silent enemy artillery opened up, and with the aid of accurate German mortars made the woods a living inferno. The roads and trails were blocked by interdicting fire and paths of advance or escape narrowed as tree bursts flamed down to form obstacles everywhere. Much of this fire stemmed from the fact that the enemy still held the dominating heights of Hill 187 at the time and was able to view the advancing troops.

Casualties suffered by the badly-hit 3rd Battalion were greater for November 21st than the ***entire*** 47th Infantry Regiment had suffered on any one day of previous action. In order to halt this slaughter, the 1st Infantry Division ordered the 47th to delay any further attacks and consolidate until the situation cleared. Meanwhile, all seventeen battalions of artillery from the VII Corps saturated Hill 187.

By the 20th the *Raiders* had reached positions one-half mile from the Aachen-Stolberg-Dueren railroad along a two-mile-long front and faced Nothberg and Huecheln. They had contacted the 104th Division on their left flank. The 21st did not see any advances worthy of mention, although November 22nd found the 1st Battalion in possession of Hills 187 and 167. Now Colonel Smythe brought up his reserve 2nd Battalion for an all-out drive. It was on the 22nd as well that the plan for the 47th to cross the River Inde and advance beyond was changed. Instead, the combat team was to halt at its final objective.

Distinguished Unit Citation

The *1st Battalion, 47th Infantry Regiment (Reinforced),* is cited for conspicuous battle action and outstanding performance of duty during the period of 17 to 19 November 1944. Just south of Nothberg, Germany, the enemy were established on Hills 187 and 167. Because of their commanding height and open plains at the foot of the hills, they were a strategically important objective and had to be taken at all costs. The enemy from their strong positions on these hills could observe all movements of two American infantry divisions in that sector with the result that their maneuverability was seriously hindered and casualties from observed enemy artillery fire were heavy. The *1st Battalion, 47th Infantry Regiment (Reinforced),* was assigned the mission of securing these hills and pushed out in the attack on 18 November 1944. Under withering artillery and antitank-gun fire from the front and flanks, Company B fought up to the crest, suffering 35 casualties, and held Hill 187 until lack of supplies and ammunition forced them to withdraw with 51 prisoners. Again, the next day, Hill 187 was assaulted, this time by Company C. Through a hail of fire, they fought up the slope, moving, holding, digging in, until they reached the crest on 19 November and seized Hill 187 after a small-arms, bayonet, and hand-grenade battle. Eighty-six enemy dead and forty-nine prisoners, including two officers, were the evidence of a bitter fight. Hill 167 was attacked on 18 November 1944 by Company A and, like Hill 187, it presented the same fanatic enemy resistance, forcing them to crawl up the hill, inch by inch, suffering 17 casualties, until they were able to rush the crest on the morning of 19 November. Enemy losses were 23 dead and 40 captured. The capture of these hills denied the enemy of observation, permitting the attacking division to advance towards the Roer River. This action assumes greater significance when it is realized that the men of the *1st Battalion, 47th Infantry Regiment (Reinforced),* were not fresh battle troops but combat men who had pushed on and on, despite the fatiguing elements and losses in veteran personnel in 5 continuous months of actual front-line action. The valor, extraordinary bravery, and aggressiveness displayed by members of the *1st Battalion, 47th Infantry Regiment (Reinforced),* exemplified the highest traditions of the military service.

* * * *

WHEN the 47th Infantry began its drive, it stretched out simultaneously to contact the 3rd Armored Division. The accomplishment of this task was important and it produced a story of which the Ninth Division ever will be proud. It is about a member of Company *C,* 899th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and demonstrates the closeness with which the men of that unit supported their infantry comrades.

Valor might have been his middle name. At Schevenhuette he helped breach the *Siegfried* and was part of that outfit which later pushed back the vicious German counterattack. He held the *Bronze Star* for heroism in action. At 31, Staff Sergeant Herschel F. Briles was a veteran platoon leader of the 899th T.D. Battalion. He had served at El Guettar and beyond—now his company was attached to the 47th Infantry in its fight along the Aachen-Dueren axis.

When his outfit began attacking near Scherpenseel on November 20-21, Briles needed every bit of his fortitude to keep going. The extreme fatigue of a malaria fever relapse was sapping his strength, but knowing the need for every man in the forthcoming battle, Sergeant Briles stuck it out against chills and sickness. His actions in this condition read like a Paul Bunyan story and earned for him the *Congressional Medal of Honor.*

The Germans were wedging a pocket to prevent junction of the 47th with the 3rd Armored. It was at this time that Briles led his platoon of destroyers across an open slope and they came under concentrated artillery fire while in the quagmires of mud. One of the destroyers received a direct hit and started to burn. As it was mired deeply the destroyer became a fixed target and the enemy poured

TANK-INFANTRY TEAMS BLEND INTO GERMANY

machine-gun, rifle and artillery fire into the exposed and crippled vehicle.

Briles dismounted, leaving the protection of his armored destroyer and ran across 200 yards of muddy, open ground, braving the heavy artillery and small-arms fire. Two men, he knew, were still alive in the flaming turret.

He beat away the flames, using his hands, and lowered himself into the inferno. After carrying away the two wounded soldiers, the malaria-ridden sergeant returned under fire and extinguished the flames. He then had the destroyer removed under fire, and taken to the rear for repair.

On the following morning Briles drove his destroyer into the advancing wedge of German infantry. Using his machine gun, he sprayed death and destruction—breaking up the enemy pocket, capturing 55 officers and men and enabling the American forces to join.

As the day progressed one of his vehicles was knocked out of action by a concealed tank. Once more, Briles left the comparative safety of his own destroyer and twice ran through heavy artillery fire to evacuate two wounded from the blazing T.D. Although there was extreme danger that the ammunition would explode momentarily, the fearless sergeant returned to put out the fire . . . after which he had *that* destroyer salvaged!

The Germans must have felt relieved that Staff Sergeant Herschel F. Briles was operating under the handicap of illness . . . no telling what he might have done were he completely well!

* * * *

THE refreshened Raider 2nd Batallion jumped off from the vicinity of Schevenhuette on the morning of November 23rd and chopped forward along a route which led through Gressenich, Hastenrath, Volkenrath and against stiff opposition in the form of die-hard infantry, heavy artillery and flat trajectory fire to reach, capture and push through to the eastern edge of Nothberg. Here it was halted by strong defenses. After capturing Nothberg, the 2nd was to advance through Huecheln, clear resistance there and then go on to take the second regimental objective, Wilhelmshoehe. To aid in this attack, the 1st Battalion moved to Rohl where it prepared to assist the 2nd Battalion the following day.

The 2nd Battalion of the 47th was combined with the 32nd Armored Battalion of the 3rd Armored Division to form a special task force. Perched upon 3rd Armored tanks the 2nd Battalion rode through the woods, into the open and toward the western edge of Huecheln. Almost immediately the armor was hit by heavy anti-tank fire and forced to withdraw. The 2nd Battalion dismounted and began to advance on foot. German defenders waged their usual whole-hearted defense and each foot gained was bought with blood. Enemy hold-outs infested every house and required smoke and hand grenade persuasion to make them give up, but Huecheln was taken and fully organized by night.

Meanwhile, the 3rd Battalion's Company K cleared out the fortified factory strongpoint of Bovenberg and the battalion was free to advance as planned.

The 2nd Battalion led the advance on the 25th, following up a three-minute artillery preparation to capture Wilhelmshoehe. Heavy mortar, machine-gun and bazooka fire failed to stop the battalion as it advanced over the muddy ground to reduce the bitterly held emplacements of Wilhelmshoehe, which were part of an underground tunnel scheme. By the end of the day Company *K* had moved to protect the left flank of the 2nd Battalion, while the 1st Battalion became positioned along the right flank, ready to launch an attack to the southeast on the 26th.

Half-way between the towns of Frenz and Langerwehe (to the southeast) lay the fortified Frenzerberg Castle, the 47th's objective on November 26th. Aided by the 32nd Armored Battalion, the regiment planned to assault the castle from the south with Company *F* while the remainder of the battalion followed up the attack supported by tanks firing from the rear. Simultaneously, Company *K* was to work northeast along the railroad tracks and move against Frenzerberg as a protection for the 2nd Battalion's left flank. When this attack got underway, the 1st Battalion—from its positions on the right of the 2nd—was to attack and reduce an enemy strongpoint which was along the Weisweiler-Langerwehe road, about 600 yards northwest of Langerwehe.

Assault upon the fortified castle began at 10:45 A.M. with Company *F* mounting tanks and heading toward Frenzerberg. The woods had been left behind and with the clearing of terrain came strong anti-tank fire from the right front. Since Company *K* was moving well along on its route, Colonel Smythe withdrew the 2nd and had it follow Company *K*, with the idea of hitting at the objective from the north. Thus Company *K* became the assault company.

Just after noon Company *K* reached Frenzerberg and began a one-thousand yard advance under fire to reach its objective, during which Staff Sergeant James W. Searles singlehandedly fought 50 enemy paratroopers, killing two and forcing 40 to surrender! The doughs succeeded in capturing two buildings which were outside the castle courtyard, although they were down to a company strength of only *thirty-five* men of the 150 who had begun the drive. A company of German paratroopers was defending the fortification and they opened a stiff fight with the remnants of Company *K*.

The approaches to the interior of the castle were controlled by a gate house and over seventy paratroopers were barricaded at this position. It was a solid stone construction and was surrounded by a deep, 20-foot-wide moat filled with water. A typical middle-ages drawbridge led over the moat to a barricaded oaken door . . . the only entrance to the castle itself.

* * * *

PFC. CARL V. SHERIDAN was eighteen years old when he joined the Army on May 1, 1944, and he had reported for duty with the 47th Infantry on November 1st—in time to engage in the regiment's current offensive and to earn a posthumous *Congressional Medal of Honor*. Sheridan had been made a bazooka gunner in the company and his importance grew as the company was cut down to thirty-five men. The ammunition bearer had been wounded and Sheridan was carrying both the bazooka and as many rockets as he could.

When he realized that his was the only weapon available which had enough firepower to demolish the barricaded door, Sheridan decided to rush across the open courtyard alone and to place devastating fire upon the strongpoint, blowing an opening through the door. Disregarding his own safety, he dashed across the courtyard through a hail of fire, and reached a waist-high wall which bordered the moat. From here he was subjected to small-arms fire and grenades. Although handicapped by the lack of an assistant gunner and alone against the fire falling from the castle, Sheridan calmly slipped a rocket into the bazooka and fired at the door . . . he fired another, both shots were well aimed.

Having only one round remaining and knowing it must count, he rushed directly opposite the door from his semi-protected wall position and fired the last round at point-blank range, shattering the door and making an opening large enough to charge through. Then, as the rocket exploded he dropped his bazooka, drew his pistol and turned to the rear, shouting at the soldiers covering his gallant and lone advance, "Come on, men; let's get them!"

Pistol in hand he led the attack through the demolished entrance, but was struck and instantly killed.

The remaining men of Company *K* occupied the southwest corner of the castle and faced the strong enemy garrison. That evening the 2nd Battalion reached the vicinity of Frenzerberg. Company *G* was dispatched north of the castle during the hours of darkness to cut off any escape of the garrison. The company moved northeast along the railroad tracks and came in from the east and into positions north of the castle, while the men of Company *F*—aided by one platoon of Company *E* and some tanks—joined forces with the hard-pressed Company *K* to the south.

The enemy held out within the thick walls of Frenzerberg Castle during the 27th, despite a steady hammering of artillery and the resultant fires begun within his position area. The German commander was allowed a short truce to evacuate his wounded, although he refused to surrender. Just after 9 A.M. on the 28th, Company *G* stormed the castle covered by Company *F*. One and a half hours later the enemy was either wiped out or captured and fortified Frenzerberg Castle took its place among the heroic battles of 47th Infantry history.

As the battle at Frenzerberg commenced the 1st Battalion was able to reduce the strongpoint to the northwest of Langerwehe. By nightfall of the 26th the battalion was positioned firmly astride the road.

One hundred and forty-five days of continuous tactical employment were at an end for the men of the 47th C.T. with the fall of Frenzerberg. During the 29th and 30th the regiment was relieved on the line and made its way toward the Camp Elsenborn area . . . for a greatly deserved period of rest and recuperation. Against strong resistance and in miserable weather the 47th had done its job well.

When the *Raiders* arrived at Camp Elsenborn to rejoin the Ninth Division, letters of commendation from two generals awaited them. Passes were wait-

Distinguished Unit Citation

The *Medical Detachment, 47th Infantry Regiment,* and attached personnel, is cited for conspicuous battle action and outstanding performance of duty during the period 21 to 27 November 1944. Because of the commanding high ground which the enemy occupied and the enemy-observed low ground through which the combat troops pressed their attacks, enemy small-arms, mortar, and artillery fire was incessantly heavy and effective. Friendly fire was equally strong and the resultant casualties to both sides were severe. Working tirelessly through this heavy fire, the *Medical Detachment, 47th Infantry Regiment,* succeeded in evacuating 800 casualties from the battlefield, often removing them from behind enemy lines and undoubtedly saving many of these lives through their prompt removal and administration of blood plasma and other life saving procedures administered at the Aid Stations. Although hindered by the death of 1 officer and 6 medical soldiers plus the loss of 18 through wounds and 69 others as nonbattle casualties, the *Medical Detachment, 47th Infantry Regiment,* succeeded in accomplishing a perilous and exceedingly difficult evacuation problem, saving countless lives by a magnificent display of courage, teamwork and superb, unselfish, unflinching devotion to duty, and reflects the finest traditions of the Army of the United States.

ing, too; and except for a few officers and men left behind to keep an eye on equipment, most of the combat team was given an opportunity to visit nearby Belgian cities and enjoy a little peace of mind.

* * * *

THE first day of December found the 60th C.T. (reinforced with tanks and T.D.'s) following out a V Corps directive which ordered the team to the Lammersdorf-Muetzenich area to deepen the defense of the Corps sector. The *Go-Devils* dug in, sighted guns, registered mortars and artillery, and laid lines of communications, remaining in these positions until relieved by the 1st Division's 16th Infantry on December 5-6.

December 4th was a clear day with occasional snow flurries, and it was the day on which the Ninth received orders to depart for the vicinity of Eschweiler to relieve the 1st Infantry Division along the edge of the Huertgen Forest and take up the drive to the Roer. The *break* was over and the final Ninth Division offensive of 1944 was about to begin.

Northward movement of the Ninth to relieve its old friend and partner, the 1st Infantry Division, began at 8 A.M. on cloudy December 5th. At the same time the Division command post moved to Bergrath, Germany. By nightfall of December 7th the Ninth was positioned in an area west of Konzendorf, Echtz, Schlich and Merode. Although most of the 47th Infantry remained at Elsenborn, the regiment's 1st Battalion was attached to the 60th Infantry which had arrived on line near Langerwehe and Luchem. This sector was fairly quiet during the changeover, although small-arms, machine-gun and mortar fire fell sporadically on positions during mid-afternoon. With the assumption of the sector by the Ninth, doughs dug in on the muddy line: Volkenrath-Werth-Hamich - Langerwehe - Luchem; and those who knew what date it was did some wool-gathering. It was the third anniversary of Pearl Harbor; and as defenses were improved that night, some doggies turned their thoughts to the days of peace and wondered how much longer the war would last.

The composition of the 39th and 60th Combat Teams in their last offensive of 1944 demonstrates, once again, the complete inter-dependence of the various types of units upon one another for success in battle.

39th Combat Team: 39th Infantry; Company *A*, 899th T.D. Battalion; Company *C*, Assault Gun Platoon and 81mm Platoon, 746th Tank Battalion; One platoon, Company *A*, 15th Engineer Combat Battalion—with the 26th Field Artillery Battalion in direct support.

60th Combat Team: 60th Infantry; 1st Battalion, 47th Infantry; Company *B* and one platoon Company *C*, 899th T.D. Battalion; Company *B* and one platoon Company A, 746th Tank Battalion; Company *C*, 15th Engineer Combat Battalion; Company *C*, 87th Chemical Battalion—with the 60th Field Artillery Battalion in direct support.

In addition, the Ninth Medical Battalion furnished its usual detachments in close support of the attacking infantry, and the 34th and 84th Field Artillery Battalions were in direct support of the attack, as well as the 957th Field Artillery Battalion, which operated in support of the 26th Field Artillery.

There was not a great deal of time for wondering about home, however, for this was the tip of the Huertgen. The Ninth Infantry Division was back with the VII Corps and preparations were going forward for an attack. Moreover, the enemy had been strengthened considerably since September. He was bringing out such weapons as his new *King Tiger* tank, the 70-ton giant with armor plate on the face of the turret which was 180mm thick!

The mission of the Division was to attack to the east in conjunction with 3rd Armored Division, to seize and hold initially the towns of KONZENDORF, ECHTZ, SCHLICH, and MERODE. It was estimated that the enemy's resistance to our advance would be strong. His defense consisted of centers of resistance formed by built-up communities in the sector and dug-in positions between these communities. The enemy line, which at some points was only 75 yards from our own, was held by the Fifth Parachute Regiment in the southern sector, with two battalions in line and one in reserve, and the 8th Parachute Regiment in the northern sector, with two battalions in line and one in reserve. The 9th Parachute Regiment was in reserve position in the MERKEN-ECHTZ area. Enemy artillery was expected to be heavy and for the most part observed.

—Ninth Division Report of Operations

* * * *

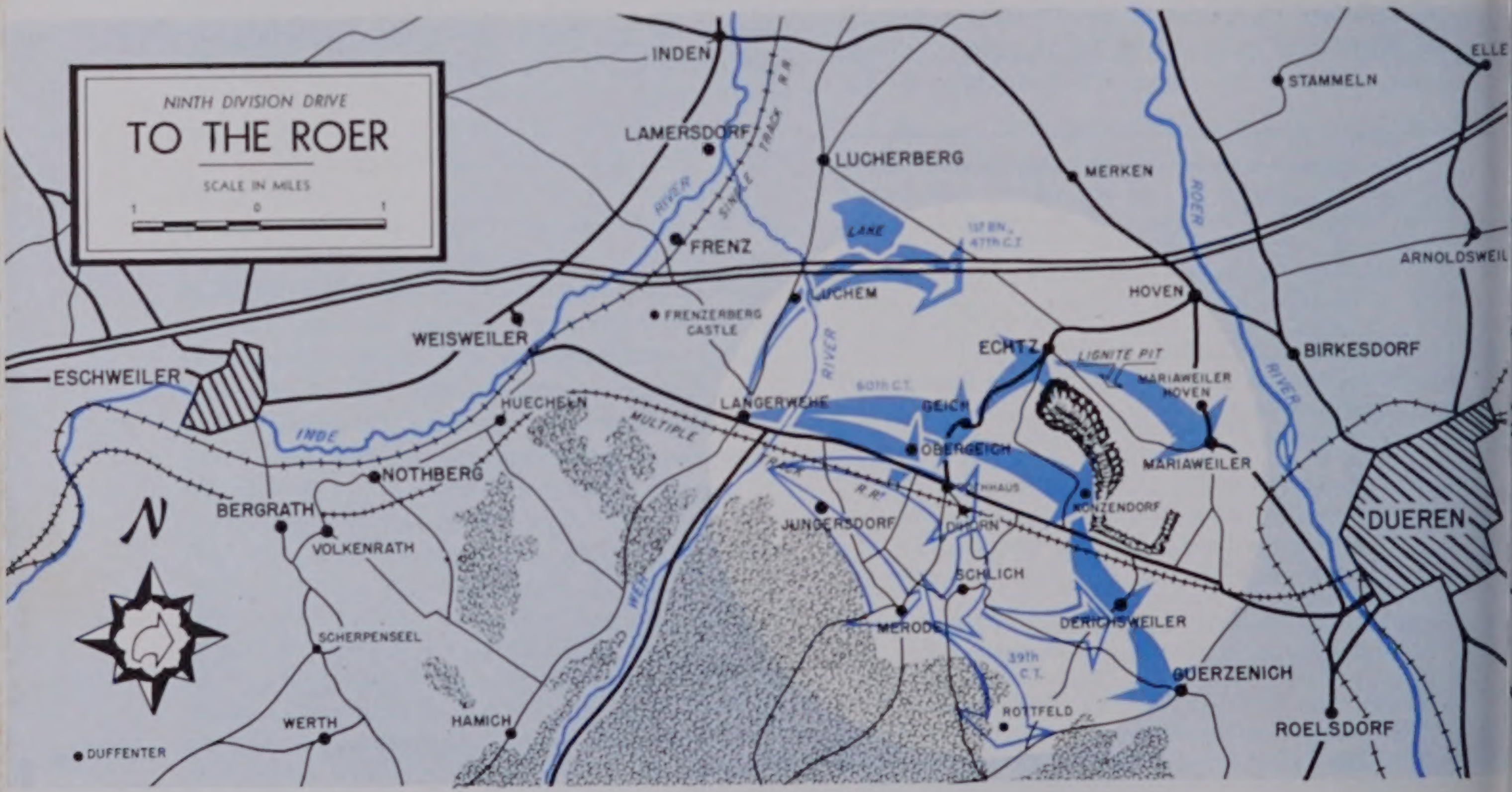
MERODE was a formidable strongpoint and held against repeated and spirited attacks by the Americans. December 9th dawned to find the Ninth Infantry Division faced with practically the same problems which had blocked the 1st Division in this area. The enemy was strong before the line and was waging an excellent defensive for the Roer—despite the frequent and well-planned artillery concentrations which rained down upon him.

On this day the Ninth held itself in readiness for the December 10th VII Corps offensive and probed forward with reconnaissance units. Enemy mortar and long range artillery fell on forward positions, while the Ninth Divarty readied itself for retaliatory blows on the folowing day.

Southeast of the town of Lucherberg is a lake which, when viewed from the air, forms the outline of a man's head. The northeast bank of this lake is almost straight and parallels a farmers' roadway which leads into the town itself. The first mission of the Ninth's attack was capture and holding of the southeasternmost tip of the lake, later extending this hold to include the territory to the *Autobahn* (super-highway) and toward Echtz. This mission had the effect of protecting the Division's left flank and was assigned the *Raider* 1st Battalion.

The second phase began with the afternoon attack of the 60th to the east in coordination with Combat Command *R* of the 3rd Armored to seize the towns of Obergeich, Geich and Rothhaus and to hold the town of Konzendorf. Following the seizure of Echtz by CC*R*, the 60th was to relieve the armor and prepare to meet enemy counterattacks from any direction.

While Colonel Van Houten moved his combat team north of the black-top Aachen-Dueren highway, Colonel Bond's *Falcons* were to wait along the sloping extremities of the woods to the south of the road. The 39th was to attack east from the vicinity


NINTH DIVISION DRIVE
TO THE ROER
SCALE IN MILES
1
0
1
INDEN
LAMERSDORF
SINGLE TRACK R.R.
RIVER
FRENZ
FRENZERBERG CASTLE
WEISWEILER
ESCHWEILER
INDE
HUECHELN
MULTIPLE
NOTHBERG
BERGRATH
VOLKENRATH
N
SCHERPENSEEL
WERTH
HAMICH
DUFFENTER
LUCHERBERG
LAKE
1st BN., 47th C.T.
LUCHEM
RIVER
LANGERWEHE
60th C.T.
GEICH
OBERGEICH
R.R.
ROTHHAUS
JUNGERSDORF
D'HORN
SCHLICH
MERODE
39th C.T.
ROTTFELD
ECHTZ
LIGNITE PIT
MARIAWEILER HOVEN
MARIAWEILER
KONZENDORF
DERICHSWEILER
GUERZENICH
MERKEN
HOVEN
ROER
RIVER
STAMMELN
BIRKESDORF
ARNOLDSWEIL
ELLE
DUEREN
ROELSDORF

MERODE CASTLE

of Jungersdorf along the railroad which parallels the black-top highway and seize D'Horn. When the Geiches had been captured, a signal was to be given and the regiment would attack and seize the towns of Schlich and Merode.

General Craig had prescribed an unusual maneuver to capture the strongpoint of Merode Castle and had this to write of his scheme:

> ". . . . the maneuver to push through the positions taken over from the 1st Division prior to December 10, 1944, was very complicated. An extremely important role was played by 60th Infantry in forming a base of departure for a flank attack by the 2d Battalion of the 39th Infantry under Colonel Gunn, who first advanced abreast of the 60th and on their right as far as D'Horn, and then with his rear covered by the 60th, he attacked at right angles in order to reduce Merode Castle and the town adjacent to it. It was only by this maneuver that it was possible for the remainder of the regiment (39th) to get out of the woods and pick up the advance as a regiment abreast of the 60th."

December 10th was one of those days which weather men term *cloudy to clear*. The earth was damp and the uncomfortable feeling that accompanies a sleep on Germany's soil seeped into the bones and flesh of the assault troops—waiting for the signal to push forward.

The night before had been a busy one. To insure the success of the attack, Lt. Colonel Frank L. Gunn previously had dispatched Lt. Myron *Mike* Wolfson, a portion of his platoon (Company *F*) and some engineers with 200 pounds of TNT aboard 5 tanks on a bold reconnaissance down the black-top highway. Their mission was to ascertain whether the railroad underpass just at the edge of D'Horn had been blown by the enemy and if so, to explode a pathway for the advance, one large enough to accommodate both men and tanks. Wolfson and his men discovered the underpass was not blown by the enemy and so proceeded to investigate the village of D'Horn. The unofficial story is that when the balance of the 2nd Battalion launched its attack toward D'Horn, Wolfson and his crew were discovered to be comfortably occupying a house and awaiting the arrival of reinforcements!

It was on December 10, 1944, that the well-liked Captain (Father) Anthony F. DeLaura of the 47th's 1st Battalion voluntarily evacuated ten casualties from an uncharted mine field. Then, although wounded himself, Father DeLaura continued to evacuate others.

The *Raider* 1st Battalion launched its attack at 7:30 A.M. and was able to advance swiftly against light opposition. With the able flanking support of the 415th Infantry on its left and a platoon of tanks on its right, the battalion reached the southern tip of its objective at 10 A.M. Slightly after noon the Germans launched a strong counterattack from the left flank against the 1st Battalion. Aided by artillery and tanks the doughboys warded off this blow, but were unable to extend their left flank along the lake until it was dark.

With this initial strike to the northeast, the stage was set for phase two. The 60th received the signal for its 2nd Battalion to jump off at 3:15 P.M. and seize the towns of Geich and Rothhaus in conjunction with elements of the 3rd Armored Division. The 2nd Battalion followed Task Force *Hogan* (the armored force), by-passed Obergeich, went on to the outskirts of Geich and then placed a roadblock (Company *E*) to the south at Rothhaus.

Fifteen minutes after the 2nd went into the attack,

MOMENTARY LULL AT GEICH

the 1st Battalion of the 60th followed Task Force *Kane*—another of the 3rd Armored forces—and this tank-infantry team marched cross country to the vicinity of Echtz. As artillery rolled over Echtz, doughboys waited in muddy ditches along the roads, preparatory to attacking the town—now a mass of wreckage and death. Then the artillery was lifted and the infantry pressed into the northwest corner of the town against scattered resistance. The enemy had been retreating but he still found time to booby trap his own dead!

* * * *

DURING the day, General Collins came upon the scene and asked why the 39th was waiting. General Craig told the Corps commander that he would like to move the *Falcons* out but that General Collins' own Corps orders were to await the capture of the Geiches. General Collins said that was not what he had wanted. Whereupon the Ninth's commander reiterated that he would like to take the D'Horn positions simultaneously with the capture of the Geiches. The Corps commander agreed, "Go ahead!"

That was the signal and at 3:15 the 39th began its historic attack, when the *AAA-O* helmeted 2nd Battalion jumped into the assault. The 2nd moved east along the railroad which runs almost parallel to the Aachen-Dueren road, pushed through Jungersdorf, and under the protective smoke, machine-gun and mortar fire from the 1st and 3rd *Falcon* Battalions, Colonel Gunn was able to advance his battalion abreast of the 60th as far as D'Horn. With his left now covered by the 60th he turned at right angles, attacking toward the village. One hour and fifteen minutes after the battalion had started upon its way Company *E* was entering the objective, and within a short time Companies *E* and *G* had organized D'Horn for the night, and there awaited further orders.

The attached 4th Cavalry Squadron, with elements of the 635th T.D. and 297th Engineer Battalion, anchored the Division right flank during these operations, and maintained contact between the 39th Infantry and the 83rd Division.

Those who witnessed the assault of the 39th Infantry on the fortified Merode-Schlich area during the 11th were privileged to see one of the finest examples of maneuvering in military history, as well as a brave display of *marching fire* on the part of the 1st Battalion.

An explanation of the terrain and location of the towns in the 39th's zone of advance demonstrates the problem which faced the regiment. Merode had been a hard nut to crack; it was fortified strongly and had resisted all assaults to date. The houses in both Schlich and Merode are not as close together as is usual for German towns or villages and the main east-west street of Merode is only one yard wide. Dominating the town of Merode is its castle . . . a well located citadel having an excellent and commanding view of the surrounding countryside over to Dueren, Langerwhehe . . . and even across the Roer to the northeast. Merode Castle, being off the Aachen-Dueren road, controls the flow of traffic and the advance of any one attempting to leave the confines of the Merode Forest. The locale was made naturally strong by another factor in 1944. Since most of the roads and trails through the woods then were unsuitable for military vehicles, the logical route of advance was through Jungersdorf and that allowed the enemy to have observation.

Merode Castle is surrounded by a moat which measures twenty feet in width and six or seven feet in depth. There is only one entrance—over a small bridge. To the northeast of the castle is the town of Schlich and the village of D'Horn. These are connected by a small highway which branches off the main Aachen-Dueren road. At that time, any travel over the area could be viewed by the enemy in the castle, and that is what made capture of Merode and its citadel so difficult.

The men of the 39th had been resting several hours when General Craig ordered Colonel Van H. Bond to take Merode Castle. Colonel Bond then made the prophetic statement that he would have his command post in the castle by nightfall and that General Craig could visit him there. That was a rather strange remark to make, but one which the 39th's commanding officer had every intention of keeping.

The plan of attack was excellent. The 2nd Battalion was to attack south from the area of D'Horn and head for Schlich. The 1st Battalion would jump off to the southeast, leaving the woods to assault Merode. In effect the two directions taken would cross, and if successful would form a double-envelopment—as well as the vortex of a 45-degree triangle.

At 8 A.M. the drive got underway. General Collins was one of the onlookers, Colonel Bond another. Seemingly unstoppable, the 1st and 2nd Battalions headed for their objectives. Artillery and small-arms fire hit hard at the 1st Battalion, but its doughs kept advancing and firing. The enemy waged a most stubborn defensive from his bunkers and dug-in positions at Merode, which the men of Company *A* reached at 8:35 A.M. But the men of the 1st kept attacking.

Evidently the hours of rest, combined with the veteran ability of that battalion, had made the 1st invincible on the 11th. No matter how fiercely the enemy counterattacked, and no matter how difficult he made the advance, the 1st thrust out time after time, reducing bunkers and not allowing the enemy a moment's respite.

By nightfall the battalion was consolidating positions in Merode. When the 1st Battalion and the artillery had finished with famed Merode Castle, it was only a shell of its former stateliness. Shattered relics of past glory lay beneath masses of stone, and the ancient towers bade farewell to finer days. Jeeps rolled out of the misty evening, through the crest-topped gate; they dodged wreckage as they found parking places in the rubble-cluttered courtyard.

While the 1st Battalion pushed out to the Merode area, the 2nd had been attacking with its Companies *E* and *G* against fortified Schlich. Here, too, the Germans waged a stiff struggle. It was not until 4:30 P.M. that the town was cleaned out—and only after a severe house-to-house fight. With the joining of these two battalions, however, the fate of the much-fought over region was decided. In addition to the many dead left by the enemy, 190 men were prisoners of the 39th C.T.

Colonel Bond awaited visitors that night . . . his command post was Merode Castle, if anyone wanted to know!

* * * *

MORNING of December 11th found the 1st Battalion of the 60th mopping up resistance within Echtz, while the 3rd Battalion attacked at dawn with the little village of Konzendorf as its objective. This village is near a lignite pit which was ordered by-passed by General Craig, and the conformation of the quarry was such that it "bent" the line.

A pounding from enemy self-propelled artillery, anti-tank guns and mortars met the 3rd Battalion advance from Rothhaus, but by 9:15 P.M. the western edge of the village was reached. Other elements of the battalion stretched south and north to begin the bloody struggles for the towns of Derichsweiler and Mariaweiler, which were contested heavily by the enemy. After 3 P.M. the fighting subsided somewhat, although the Germans retained possession of much of the battalion's objective.

Meanwhile, the 2nd Battalion teamed up with Task Force *Hogan* to reduce and move into Geich after a heavy struggle. That night Company *E* was left to hold the town of Geich, while Company *F* occupied Obergeich and Company *G* organized Rothhaus.

The enemy had withstood constant pounding throughout the day and by nightfall he remained still in fairly good shape. His artillery and self-propelled guns harassed the 1st and 2nd *Go-Devil* Battalions, while his infantry continued to make an aggressive stand. On the other hand, 231 enemy prisoners and a large number of German dead and wounded told the ferocity with which the 60th C.T. was assaulting the enemy strongpoints.

Cloudy, rainy December 12th rose from behind the smoke stacks and factories to the east to open another day of grueling existance for the men up front. Village or town fighting is one of the more difficult types of warfare and the continuous and costly drive to the Roer was testing the last drop of energy within each infantryman's frame.

Capture of Schlich and Merode gave the 39th C.T. an opportunity to push on toward Derichsweiler, which is just across the road from that large quarry mentioned previously. With the 39th assuming responsibility for the right (southern) side of the highway, the 60th C.T. carried on its fight for the

Mariaweiler-Hoven area. The team had all three battalions in the attack, although the 1st was attached to Task Force *Kane* for the day.

Distinguished Unit Citation

Company B, 60th Infantry Regiment, is cited for outstanding performance of duty in action against the enemy on 12 December 1944, in Germany. *Company B, 60th Infantry Regiment,* jumped off in the face of withering enemy artillery, mortar, machine-gun, and small-arms fire and made its way in a succession of heroic pushes across a stretch of flat, open terrain. Though suffering heavy casualties among its leaders, the unit, inspired by innumerable individual acts of gallantry, rallied and pressed the assault forward. Vicious enemy fire pinned the men to the ground and decimated their lines on three separate occasions. Undaunted and with outstanding courage, the troops plunged forward with great determination. The battered elements of the unit completely overran a series of fortified trenches, inflicting casualties upon the defenders and forcing the remaining Germans to flee in disorder. The courage, fighting spirit, and gallantry displayed by the officers and men of *Company B, 60th Infantry Regiment,* resulted in the capture of a hostile strong point, thus securing the flank of the American drive toward the Roer River and exemplifying the highest traditions of the armed forces.

The 2nd Battalion departed from Geich at 5 A.M., crossed its line of departure east of Echtz at 7:30 A.M., advanced to the south then turned east on industrial Mariaweiler. Until the battalion reached the edge of that town, little opposition was encountered. However, the defenders of Mariaweiler shortly began a most determined battle, and it was only after 1 P.M. that elements of the 2nd Battalion began to occupy portions of their objective. The enemy was furious at his loss of positions and counterattacked vigorously with infantry and two self-propelled guns from the southeast corner of the town. This counter-measure was repulsed, causing the enemy to lose one of his S.P. guns. Company *G* was divided, however, and some Germans remained within its positions even after dark. At this time the 2nd Battalion had a foothold within Mariaweiler, with its Company *E* on the north, Company *F* in the center and Company *G* to the south.

The other *Go-Devil* battalions had equally difficult assignments for the 12th. As attachment of Task Force *Kane,* the 1st Battalion launched an attack to seize the town of Hoven, which sits astride several minor roads and is a few hundred yards from the *Autobahn.* The strategy which captured Hoven sent the armored force to the north and the 1st Battalion to the south. German resistance was the most determined that the battalion had encountered in some time, and it was during this battle to gain the town's southern zone that Company *B* earned a *Distinguished Unit Citation.* Notwithstanding the difficulties of advance, the battalion smashed the enemy's defenses, and shortly before 3 P.M. was in possession of its goal . . . preparing defensive positions.

The 3rd Battalion, which had supported the 2nd with fire during the day, was having its hands full at the little village of Konzendorf on the western edge of the quarry. Gains were measured in groups of buildings and it was not until the last enemy was overwhelmed that Konzendorf ceased to be a problem.

December 13th popped up on the calendar and the *Go-Devils* continued their drive to complete the capture of Mariaweiler. During a day of rough fighting the 2nd Battalion pushed all the remaining Germans toward the southeast end of the town and its forward troops advanced as far as the factory area. The 1st Battalion at Hoven sent its Company *A* to aid the hard-fighting 2nd early in the morning; for, in addition to its close-in fighting, the 2nd was recipient of extremely heavy mortar and artillery fire from Dueren across the river. Over 500 mortar shells were counted in one hour by its forces in the center of Mariaweiler. Thus it was welcome aid when Company *A* attacked to overcome enemy forces along the northern edge of Mariaweiler and made contact with the 2nd Battalion at 9 A.M. When their mission was completed, the men of that company infiltrated back to Hoven at 2 P.M.

In the meantime, the 3rd Battalion began extending its lines. Company *K* moved north then east to launch an early morning attack on the southern edge of Mariaweiler. Overcoming a dogged enemy stand, Company *K* crashed through the enemy defenses to contact Company *G* by 10 A.M. Shortly afterward Company *L* connected with *K* to the south of the town.

The following day was the last of well-organized Mariaweiler and its factory regions as a Nazi strongpoint. With excellent tank, tank-destroyer, and artillery support, the 3rd Battalion's Company *I* launched a speedy attack to capture the industrial region southeast of Mariaweiler, as well as 36 prisoners.

It was just after noon on this same day that the regiment received word of the approach of the 83rd Infantry Division on Guerzenich, and one platoon of Company *L* was dispatched on the mission of cleaning out any enemy resistance between the Ninth Division lines and that town (so as to make contact with the 83rd). The Germans stopped this platoon before Guerzenich, however, and the linkup was not made on the 14th.

Artillery fire had been heavy in this last lunge of the 60th and the engagements fought had shown the gameness and tenacity of its men. One example of this is the story of Private Eugene A. Fontes who was killed in action near Dueren. Fontes was a member of the 60th Medics, an aid man . . . the person who comes running when someone yells . . . "Medic, medic . . . medic!"

On the 14th Fontes saw a sergeant wounded seriously by shell fragments and he crossed a fire-swept field to render aid. Enemy artillery was heavy and the medic heard the sounds of an approaching shell. He shielded the wounded man with his own body and waited. The shell landed nearby, killing Fontes, but the gallant medic had prevented further injuries to the wounded patient.

That was the kind of soldier who made up the 60th Combat Team in its drive to the Roer.

* * * *

SOUTH of the Aachen-Dueren road another drama was transpiring—coincident with the 60th's drive to Mariaweiler. The 39th C.T. was engaged in a continuation of that memorable battle which had begun with the taking of D'Horn, Schlich and Merode. It was on the 12th that the *AAA-O* jumped off for Derichsweiler and the little village of Rottfeld on the edge of the woods south of Derichsweiler —well supported by mortar and machine-gun fire

DERICHSWEILER: DEAD GERMANS IN FOREGROUND

from the 60th's 3rd Battalion on the heights near Mariaweiler. At 8 A.M. the *AAA-O* 1st Battalion, Company *F* attached, advanced through mine fields and against small-arms and mortar fire which met them from the wooded area to their front as the group marched toward Rottfeld.

The 3rd Battalion advanced under cover of smoke against artillery, mortar and small-arms fire at 12:45 P.M. and pushed on to reach the southern edge of Derichsweiler. Although the tanks supporting this attack were held up by mines, Company *I* was fighting inside the town at 2:30 P.M. and Company *L* was close behind. By the close of the day over one-half of Derichsweiler was in the possession of the 3rd Battalion and 146 prisoners from the 942nd Infantry Regiment of the 353rd Division were now taking orders from the *Falcons* instead of the *Fuehrer!*

Early dawn of the 13th called for a continuation of this fight and the 3rd Battalion battled to consolidate its positions inside Derichsweiler. Patrols had got as far as 400 yards inside the town by morning. By 8 A.M., with the aid of two tanks and two tank destroyers, the 3rd assaulted to capture the remainder of the town. On the battalion's right flank was the town of Guerzenich, whence artillery and mortar fire poured on the American positions . . . and this as well as a fierce and steadfast defense from within that town itself.

Fighting ahead steadily against determined and die-hard opposition, the 3rd Battalion cleaned out the northwest sector of Derichsweiler slightly before noon. One hour later all but five houses in the northeast section were in its hands—3:35 P.M. saw the battalion in complete control of the town.

The Germans, once again, hurled over heavy artillery after a loss of position area. At the same time the *Falcons* called in the engineers to reconnoiter the underpasses along the railroad to the north of the town and begin clearance of rubble to allow passage of heavy vehicular traffic.

On the 14th the 39th remained in place under a shower of harassing and interdictory shelling, which fell mostly upon the 3rd Battalion in Derichsweiler. The dampness of the region had made the cold weather congeal the very marrow and this, added to the artillery of the enemy, stopped the 39th from enjoying its breather.

During the night of the 14th the Ninth Division received new boundaries which specified securing the west bank of the Roer River as the next order of business. The 39th and 60th Combat Teams were ordered to seize all ground west of the river within their zones of action, and the ruins of the city of Dueren loomed just across the river. By the following night the Ninth was along the Roer, ready to cross that waterway and head into the Rhineland. A 60th Infantry patrol was sent across the river and returned from reconnaissance on December 16th with information on crossing sites and the condition of the river on the opposite bank.

It seemed as though the Ninth Division shortly would be making another river assault, and with this in mind the 39th Infantry engaged in heavy fighting to clear out the last vestiges of the enemy in its sector. Meanwhile the Division began to plan a crossing in earnest. But as the Ninth faced toward Dueren and awaited its signal to advance, history was in the making along another sector of the long front.

To the south Germany was making its last great gamble. The *Panzers* were on the march . . . Von Rundstedt was in the saddle, calling the plays. It was the Ardennes Counter-offensive!

★ ★ ★ ★

Section IX photography credits: All Official U.S. Army Signal Corps Photos except page 246, which is by Author.

Section X

Winter Stalemate

The Battle of the Bulge

JUST south of Monschau an historic and full-scale German counter-offensive was underway. The Nazis were staking everything on one last smashing *blitz*—a minutely-planned drive backed by the *S.S.* and *Panzer* divisions and the almost forgotten *Luftwaffe*. In personal charge was Field Marshal von Rundstedt, resurrected from the deposed leaders of the *Wehrmacht* by Hitler. Von Rundstedt had termed Germany's effort "an all-out gamble", and few could have coined a more accurate description of the Battle of the Bulge, which began on the cold grey morning of December 16, 1944.

At the very moment that the enemy's concentrated power was chopping through the Eifel and the Ardennes, the Ninth Division was preparing to cross the Roer River opposite Dueren. During the night of December 16-17 and throughout the day that followed there were reports that airborne landings in "widely scattered" points had been effected in both the V and VII Corps sectors. At 10 A.M. on the 17th, General Collins ordered the 47th C.T. to stand by on a three-hour alert. One hour and forty-five minutes later the *Raiders* were attached to V Corps and Colonel Smythe's command entrucked immediately for the town of Eupen.

What lay in store was then unknown . . . but it shortly became evident that the 47th C.T. had entered into something of large-scale importance. The real story behind this offensive was, at the time, a closely-guarded German secret. It is an interesting secret to explore.

The enemy situation on December 15, 1944, was anything but favorable. Since September Hitler had been conducting a massive comb-out in his desperate search for manpower, but the large amount of reinforcements realized was only enough to equal the number of men lost during the same period. Thus Germany was approaching the same problem during early December that it had faced in late summer. Men were taken from factories, the air force and the navy—Germany had slave laborers, perhaps they could fill some of the production gaps. But they did not fill the military gap.

The battle of attrition in the west consumed every ounce of new strength gained by the enemy. He took troops who were destined for the Russian and Italian fronts and rushed them to bolster the western sector. Yes, the foe tried everything, and still it was not enough. Something had to be done to take the pressure off his front facing the Allies . . . simple mathematics told the future otherwise.

Enemy losses in the west were four or five divisions per week by December. The process of subtraction showed that his armies would be melted away to a shadow within a few months—after that there would be no one left between the Allies and Berlin. Moreover, the destruction from air over Germany was making life unbearable on the home front and the *Luftwaffe* had insufficient fuel to strike back.

It is true that the *Wehrmacht* was on its best defensive ground. The natural barriers along the frontier meant that fewer men would have to be employed in halting this threat from the west. On the other hand, Germany's sole hope of lasting in a battle of attrition was to withdraw and consolidate along a shorter front—or the Rhine. In view of this desperate situation, Hitler gathered his last

> The Ninth Infantry Division—comprising veterans who whipped the Germans in Tunisia and Sicily—never yielded an inch.
>
> —Hal Boyle *(AP)*

reserves, the fanatical *S.S.* and *Panzer* armies. He ordered issued the food, fuel and tanks—items which the German army and air force had been hoarding for a vital emergency, and Von Rundstedt was called in to make a plan for an all-out counter-offensive.

Field Marshal Karl Rudolf Gerd von Rundstedt has been described as one of Germany's most able military leaders of World War II. That is probably true. The Ninth's own General Eddy (with his XII Corps) had out-maneuvered him along the Moselle, but Von Rundstedt remained tops in so far as German leaders were concerned. That was shown in his preparation of the Ardennes counter-offensive. The German strategist devised a scheme which made full use of trickery and confusion and which relied upon speed and the usually inclement December weather to gain its goal. Rapidity would give the enemy his objectives before the Allies could rush sufficient reinforcements to halt the breakthrough; poor weather would halt—temporarily at least—attacks by the superior Allied air forces, which had proved so excellent in stopping other German offensives on the continent.

Admittedly the plan was a gamble, one of the biggest in history—for Hitler and Nazism were at stake. As a consequence the final objectives were ambitious. They called for a *blitz* to Antwerp, since that would cut off the First and Ninth U.S. Armies and the British 21st Army Group from their Allies to the south, as well as seize their only northern port of supply. Thus the Americans, British and Canadians to the north would be faced with defeat in detail . . . and the situation would be chaotic in the west.

Von Rundstedt proposed to get to the Meuse River in two days, taking Liege (his mid-way point of convergence) and Namur, then knifing through to capture Antwerp after three weeks. Enroute, the enemy was to capture the massive dumps of the 12th Army Group so as to sustain his drive. The Germans had no reserve of these items capable of backing up such a counter-offensive. Sufficient food and fuel was to come from the Allies. It was important, moreover, that these captured supplies should roll in within the first few days.

The second part of the enemy strategy was to stage diversionary attacks along positions to the south, so as to require other Allied units which were below the intended gap to remain both in place and on the defensive.

For several weeks the enemy assembled his reserves; and, whereas the unusual size of certain forces before their lines portended to the Allies that a counter-offensive might be in the offing along the long and thinly-held front, it was impossible to ascertain with any degree of accuracy the exact locality of an intended thrust from the east.

The heaviest force of the blow was designed to hit the Allies in their loosely-held section between Monschau and Echternach. Here the Americans had no more than four divisions holding what had proved a quiet sector. Seventy-five miles of front for four divisions appears to be a great deal. On the other hand, the Allies could not afford to immobilize huge masses of men along an almost natural barrier, especially when the main Allied drive was to the north in the First Army zone. It was through this gap, nonetheless, that Von Rundstedt proposed to send the bulk of his fourteen infantry and ten *S.S. Panzer* and *Panzer Grenadier* divisions, and in that decision he gained the element of surprise.

In addition to the military offensive conducted by the enemy there was to be another type—the fifth column, known as *Operation GREIF*. Parties of English-speaking enemy troops were to infiltrate and parachute behind the American lines to sabotage, cut roadways, cause confusion and seize vital supply dumps. Fully a whole brigade was employed in this fashion. They wore American uniforms, complete with dog-tags which the enemy had taken from American dead and prisoners. The Germans carried identity papers, used jeeps, tanks and other captured vehicles and were instructed in American expressions.

Dirty fighting was to be employed and the record of the *S.S.* troops during the weeks which followed showed their inhuman treatment of prisoners and civilians.

The reward of this gamble, if successful, would be enormous. Thirty-eight American and other Allied divisions—including the Ninth Infantry Division—would be pocketed to the north; the port from which the entrapped Allies drew their supplies would be in enemy hands. Not only would the command of General Eisenhower be placed in a serious situation, it would be forced to go on the defensive and possibly retreat into France.

* * * *

. . . . At 171200A (December 17th, 12 P.M.) the 47th RCT was attached to V Corps and, in one of the most brilliant tactical moves of this war, was in defensive positions in the vicinity of MONSCHAU early on the following morning, 18 December, prepared to stop any German breakthrough attempt in that sector of the Corps front.

—V Corps Operations in the ETO

NAZIDOM'S winter juggernaut cracked forward on December 16th. Its spearhead consisted of veteran *S.S.* and *Panzer* units—foremost of which was the 12th *Elite S.S.* Division, noted throughout the military world for its ruthlessness toward civilians and for its practice of murdering prisoners upon capture. These Nazi fanatics were leading the enemy strike toward the Meuse and planned to overrun Brussels as part of the two-pronged drive which had convergence upon Antwerp as its goal. Two natural routes of approach were used, one which aimed through Camp Elsenborn and the other through St. Vith. The 1st and 12th *S.S.* Divisions were hitting toward Elsenborn.

It was still dark when heavy enemy artillery opened a two and one-half hour saturation on the vital rear installations located at Roetgen, Eupen, Malmedy, Verviers and St. Vith. Beginning at 5:30 A.M. German barrages pounded out mercilessly the opening of the winter counter-offensive. In the vicinity of Monschau the 102nd Cavalry Group's 38th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron received the sector's first jolt of the breakthrough at 6:15 A.M., beginning an epic and magnificent defensive. Shortly afterwards the 1st and 12th *S.S.* Divisions struck at the 2nd and 99th Infantry Divisions. It was a heavy and swift blow, gaining further impetus from the fact that the enemy spearhead was backed by one more *Panzer* and two infantry divisions. The Germans were able to overwhelm and overrun many positions of these two V Corps units. But somehow the Americans held the Elsenborn ridge, which controlled movement for some miles around—and thus began the fight for the *Elsenborn hot corner,* key to Liege and Aachen.

Farther south, in the zone of the VIII Corps the situation was even worse, and a breach was effected between V and VIII Corps. Everyone was pressed into service to halt the offensive—the cooks, the clerks, the quartermaster and ordnance men, as was the 893rd Quartermaster Fumigation and Bath Company of V Corps. The enemy desired the vital supply dumps, and these were removed hastily to the rear or destroyed as soon as possible. Up and down the trouble zone, a sprinkling of fresh troops manned the line and slowed down the Nazi push. Nevertheless, they could stop the overwhelming force only to the north of Elsenborn. The shoulders of the breakthrough held temporarily, but the center was caving in.

That was the situation which greeted the 47th C.T. when it arrived in Eupen during the late evening of the 17th. The Germans were but a few miles from Monschau and threatening to cut the Eupen-Monschau and Eupen-Malmedy roads—for Eupen was a center of communications and supply for the Allies. Monschau, like Elsenborn ridge was the hinge along the northern neck of the bulge, and if Von Rundstedt could break through here, Liege and Aachen would fall and the Allied forces to the north would be threatened further with destruction.

* * * *

AFTER leaving Eupen, the *Raiders* had moved through strange terrain at night over roads packed with other units. All reconnaissance was made hastily, and in a brave display of coolheadedness the regiment formed a solid defense in depth against further penetrations. Colonel Smythe's command systematically contacted or discovered many uncoordinated outfits in its area and these were tied in with the 47th C.T. So numerous did the 47th's attachments become that several communications referred to the regiment as the "47th Infantry Division."

Bolstered by these organizations and backed by additional artillery, the *Raiders* were able to forestall the imminent danger of Monschau's being captured

DIGGING IN

by the enemy. All attachments regained their confidence and the hastily devised "division" held.

The "division" eventually grew to include the 3rd Battalion, one supporting field artillery battalion and Cannon Company of the 395th Infantry (99th Division); 38th Cavalry Squadron (less Troop *A*); Company *A*, 10th Tank Battalion; Company *C*, 893rd T.D.'s (less one platoon); Company *A*, 47th Armored Infantry Battalion; one platoon of Company *A*, 112th Engineer Battalion; Company *A*, 612th T.D.'s; 99th (Division) Recon Troop; Company *A*, 746th Tank Battalion; 185th F.A. Battalion and the 376th AAA (AW) Battalion (which towed 50 caliber *quad* mounts without prime movers).

When the 47th's doughs went onto the line they fell heir to a job. Nazis had broken through during the day between Konzen and Muetzenich and gone on to the hill northwest of the latter town. This penetration was thrown back vigorously and the line was re-established by the 47th, which placed a battalion on that key hill. Nightfall of the 17th found the 47th C.T. holding *the original line*, and the *Raiders* had mopped up those German troops who had broken through as well!

At dawn the persistent Germans resumed their attacks, with Hoefen and the 3rd Battalion, 395th Infantry as their primary target. The 3rd Battalion held its ground and was able to repel the invaders. A subsequent assault and armored penetration near Alzen was halted and then sealed off, with the foe being annihilated. That did not jibe with Hitler's timetable!

The enemy troops attacking in the Monschau-Elsenborn sector were Germany's best, yet those veteran units were unable to smash through to the north. And that had a telling effect upon the strategy

C RATIONS

of the *blitz.* For the Americans holding this front not only were aiding greatly in halting any projected capture of Antwerp, they personally were saving Eupen, Liege and Aachen from the Germans—as well as preventing the piecemeal destruction of the Allied armies to the north of the breakthrough area, the U.S. First and Ninth, British Second and Canadian First.

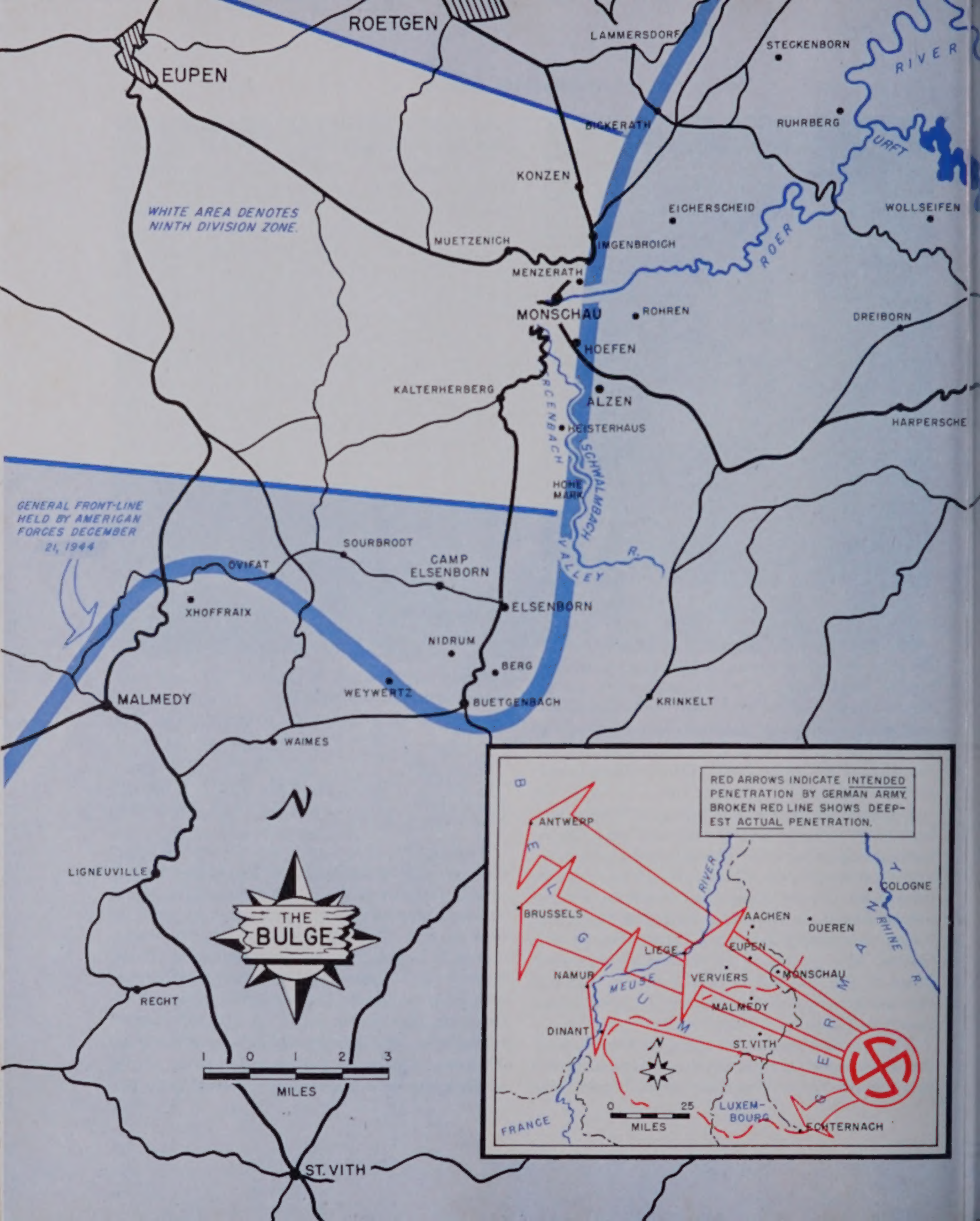
A great deal of credit for halting this thrust has been given to many organizations and men. To a high-ranking member of Von Rundstedt's staff, to combat correspondent Thomas R. Henry and to many other military writers and historians, a sizeable portion of the honors for holding at Monschau belong to the 47th Infantry's Colonel George W. Smythe. Mr. Henry, in his wartime column published by the Washington (D.C.) *STAR,* ascribed this military feat of legerdemain to former All-American footballer Colonel Smythe:

With communications cut off, Col. Smythe in a few hours organized what was essentially a complete new division from American units caught and smashed in the breakthrough. Then he used it to stop in its tracks the enemy assault, thus saving the vital communications center of Eupen in Belgium which Von Rundstedt had fixed as the convergence point for his assault on Liege and making possible the retention of the communications system already established by the 1st and 3rd Armies in Northeastern Belgium and Western Germany . . . Through the winter forest Col. Smythe set out in a jeep . . . Soon he ran into roads with American troops and guns retreating into Eupen. Col. Smythe speedily organized these retreating troops around the nucleus of his own regiment and was given unqualified command of all the troops in the area . . . The defense was a tactical masterpiece, military experts say. The enemy paratroopers were mopped up in groups in the forest . . . Heavy artillery barrages from Col. Smythe's hastily organized division prevented the Germans from relaunching the attack. Thus the probable main objective of the breakthrough was defeated.

Cloudy and foggy weather continued during the 19th as the 39th C.T. moved out at 8:30 A.M. with the Kalterherberg-Elsenborn area as its destination. The *AAA-O* route lay through Gressenich, Stolberg, Brand, Aachen and halted at Eupen—where the 2nd Battalion was attached to the 47th C.T. and committed on the *Raider* right flank. Holding the line Konzen-Monschau-Hoefen-Kalterherberg, the 39th and 47th C.T.'s were attached temporarily to the V Corps . . . and the V Corps, along with other American outfits north of the bulge, became a part of Montgomery's 21st Army Group until communications returned to normal.

Already many units were detached from the Ninth and committed in the Monschau sector; now the old standby divisions of the VII Corps—the 1st, Ninth and 3rd Armored—were rushed south in order to stem the tide which threatened to engulf the hard-pressed V Corps. The Ninth was ordered to relieve elements of the 2nd and 99th Divisions, which had been integrated under the operational command of the more experienced 2nd Division headquarters, while the 1st and 3rd Armored took up positions to the west.

When the notification came to move back, the


ROETGEN
EUPEN
LAMMERSDORF
STECKENBORN
RIVER
RUHRBERG
URFT
BICKERATH
KONZEN
EICHERSCHEID
WOLLSEIFEN
WHITE AREA DENOTES NINTH DIVISION ZONE.
MUETZENICH
IMGENBROICH
ROER
MENZERATH
MONSCHAU
ROHREN
DREIBORN
HOEFEN
KALTERHERBERG
ALZEN
PERLENBACH
HEISTERHAUS
HARPERSCHEID
SCHWALMBACH
HOHE MARK
GENERAL FRONT-LINE HELD BY AMERICAN FORCES DECEMBER 21, 1944
SOURBRODT
CAMP ELSENBORN
OVIFAT
VALLEY
R.
XHOFFRAIX
ELSENBORN
NIDRUM
BERG
MALMEDY
WEYWERTZ
BUETGENBACH
KRINKELT
WAIMES
N
LIGNEUVILLE
THE BULGE
RECHT
1 0 1 2 3
MILES
ST. VITH
RED ARROWS INDICATE INTENDED PENETRATION BY GERMAN ARMY. BROKEN RED LINE SHOWS DEEPEST ACTUAL PENETRATION.
BELGIUM
ANTWERP
RIVER
COLOGNE
GERMANY
RHINE R.
BRUSSELS
AACHEN
DUEREN
LIEGE
EUPEN
NAMUR
VERVIERS
MONSCHAU
MEUSE
MALMEDY
DINANT
N
ST. VITH
0 25
MILES
LUXEMBOURG
FRANCE
ECHTERNACH

Ninth was probing and clearing the Roer for possible crossings in the Dueren area. Only the bombing and strafing of the *Luftwaffe* and the urgency of the orders gave indication that a bulge was being created in the Ardennes.

A terse summary of the situation came from the Division's Field Order #49, of December 19th: "The enemy has pushed back our lines along a 60-mile front . . . attacks have been characterized by armored thrusts followed by infantry to consolidate gains . . ." These things the already embattled units of the 47th and 39th were discovering the hard way.

* * * *

The Ninth Infantry Division, commanded by Maj. Gen. Louis A. Craig, Raleigh, N.C., was thrown into the line in the Monschau area when the German offensive began. When the 99th was "taking it" hardest, the Ninth moved in to relieve that division around Elsenborn.

—John McDermott (UP)

THE Ninth Division began arriving at Sourbrodt during December 19th, and at 7:30 A.M. on December 20th assumed control of its sector from the 2nd Division. It was a long sector, longest in the V Corps. With the Ninth's assumption of control, the 2nd Battalion of the 39th returned to its regiment and the *Falcons* took up the defense of a narrow sector in great depth.

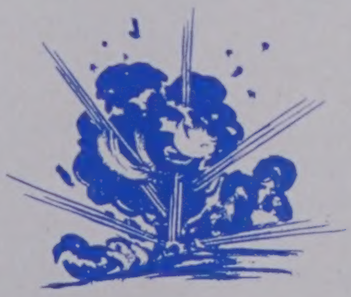
Early morning of the 20th found the 47th holding an unusually lengthy portion of this line to the north. It was along this far-reaching front, too, that cavalrymen of the attached 38th Cavalry Squadron proved adept at fooling the enemy regarding their strength. If some sort of recognition for ingenuity and valor had been in order, the 38th would have been high on the list of eligibles.

With the stabilization of the line came a sweep to clear out any German infiltration of the rear areas. On the 21st a small group of parachutists was rounded up by Company *I* of the 47th, which was searching the town of Monschau for traces of the enemy. In all, 80 prisoners were found. These paratroopers were trying to return to the German lines after having landed in the vicinity of Eupen, and theirs is a fascinating tale . . . the failure of Task Force *VON DER HEYDTE*.

A special force had been designated by the German high command to disrupt traffic over the Eupen-Malmedy highway. This group was a combat team of paratroopers under a Lt. Colonel Von der Heydte, which consisted of five companies of approximately 150 men each. Especially gleaned from Germany's available jumpers, the regiment was given careful training near Paderborn for two weeks previous to the counter-offensive. Never once were the enlisted men aware that they were going into actual combat until they were almost over the target . . . this was believed to be another training jump!

The task force was to have loaded on the 16th, but the convoy with their supplies was late and that set back the hour of departure by one day. Just prior to take-off time, the non-commissioned officers were informed of their mission . . . then the planes rose skyward. American anti-aircraft fire forced most of the 60 *JU 52* carriers off their course, and a major portion of the aircraft dropped men and supplies as much as 15 to 20 kilometers from their target.

The paratroopers were scheduled to meet at a crossroad south of Eupen where they would find their colonel at a hunting lodge. Only 200 men reached the rendezvous and with the situation not too clear at noon of the 20th, Von der Heydte instructed his men to abandon their equipment and head for the German lines in groups of no more than three. The Nazi leader informed his men that they would receive a three-week furlough and a medal upon returning to Cologne.



The reason that so many of these parachutists were captured in and around Monschau is one of the prize boomerangs of the war. Von der Heydte's radio had broken down so that he could receive but not send. He tuned in on a German civilian station and heard Propaganda Minister Goebel's false report that the town of Monschau was in German hands.

VON DER HEYDTE RECEIVES TREATMENT

The rest is history. Infantrymen of the 47th mopped up groups of stray paratroopers . . . on the 22nd the *Raiders* received a message which ended this ill-advised episode:

". . . I tried to meet German troops, I surrender because I am hurt and ill and at the end of my physical forces. Please be kind enough to send me a doctor and an ambulance, because I am not able to walk. I am lying in bed at Bouscheens and am waiting for your help and your orders."

It was signed by Von der Heydte!

* * * *

WORD was received during December 21st that the 3rd *Panzer Grenadier* Division was attacking toward Monschau. At the same time, the slow trickle of information began regarding the almost unbelievable cruelty and trickery employed by the Germans in this battle—methods which could incite only hatred amongst the civilized people of the world. General Gerow had to warn all troops that the Germans, once again, had been using the white flag to cover their closing in on American positions, then opening fire. One enemy *jeep party*, dressed in American uniforms and carrying paybooks and dog tags, was captured trying to refuel in an American Ordnance gas dump!

Then there was the story, later confirmed in War Crimes trials, of enemy atrocities against 150 Americans who upon capture were herded together in a field. The entire group was machine-gunned by the weapons of passing tanks, after which German officers shot all those who showed signs of life! Two survivors pretended death and escaped to report the incident. This was but one of many such incidents reported of the ruthless Nazi troops engaged in Von Rundstedt's drive toward Antwerp.

> *Neither rain, nor snow, nor Hitler's SS can stop the Ninth Inf. Div. ammunition carriers headed by 1/Lt. Marshall W. Potter, of Saratoga Springs, N.Y. On one such mission recently he came under machine-gun and rifle fire which pinned down ammo carriers. With two men he crawled toward the flank, captured a squad of SS men and their weapons. He sent the Nazis to the PW enclosure and the ammunition to the front.*
>
> *—The Stars and Stripes*

The 47th Infantry with its attachments (including the 2nd Battalion, 39th Infantry) had succeeded in halting an enemy attack which was mounting beyond Monschau during December 19th. Much of the credit for this feat was due to Colonel Smythe's composite artillery, which smashed the German attempt before it could get under way. There followed a lull for the next few days, and the 47th strengthened its defenses with roadblocks, mine fields, wire obstacles and trip flares.

Then the Germans tried again. During the afternoon of the 21st an attack by two regiments of the 3rd *Panzer Grenadier* Division was met by the 39th Infantry's 1st Battalion and Company *I*, then filling the gap between the *AAA-O* 1st and 2nd Battalions. Despite their superior numbers, the *Panzers* were stopped in place by the massed fires of the Ninth, 2nd and 99th Division artilleries—and the slaughter inflicted upon the enemy was terrific. Company *I* commander Captain Dana reported the German first-aid men so numerous that it seemed as though the Americans had fired upon a large hospital group!

This great loss did not stop the Germans, however, for on the 22nd they hit the 99th Recon Troop in its positions on the high ground east of Kalterherberg. One platoon was overrun and another was surrounded. Veteran elements of Company *E*, 47th Infantry quickly reinforced the troops and both of the 99th's platoons were able to withdraw eventually.

WINTER WARFARE

MINE LAYING

Infiltrations began in the 39th sector during the afternoon. Considerable armored movement was heard in the Rohren vicinity as well on this day. Toward evening the enemy followed up his earlier smoke-covered infiltrations with a strong attack against the *Falcon* 2nd Battalion. Backed by heavy firepower the Germans penetrated the 2nd's lines, but a 500-yard gap made by the enemy was closed through aggressive action of the support platoons of Companies *F* and *G* . . . and the foe was wiped out. On December 23rd the 39th attacked and regained the ground it had lost the night before. That ended some of the roughest fighting in the sector.

The actions which occurred during the 21st and 22nd in front of the Ninth (particularly the 39th Infantry) were the last attempts of the enemy to break through the Monschau-Elsenborn sector with the mission of reaching and capturing Liege. During both enemy assaults, the Germans were halted in their main drive by the accurate concentrated massed artillery fires of Ninth Divarty and by the bravery of the *AAA-O* 2nd Battalion. The devastation wrought by the artillery is better realized when it is understood that approximately *eleven thousand* rounds of ammunition were fired on one location—Hohe Mark—during the night of the 22nd.

Moreover, the importance of this two-day battle was significant. Had these attacks by the 3rd *Panzer Grenadier* and 272nd *Volksgrenadier* Divisions been successful, there would have been nothing to prevent the enemy from reaching Liege within a day, thus cutting off the forces to the north and south of the Ninth Infantry Division. Such an event might well have given the German counter-offensive a smashing victory.

It was evident that by December 22nd the first phase of the enemy counter-offensive had ended. The results were a tribute to the stubborn defensive waged by the American ground force soldiers. Although his drive had taken the enemy over fifty miles to the front and created a salient which was forty-five miles across at its widest point, the *blitz* was halting slowly and was almost at an end. Allied air power had gotten through on the clear days to aid the ground troops; and blind bombing was used so effectively that the enemy was amazed as to how the Americans could bomb through clouds and hit their targets.

At this time the V Corps was stretched along a line which jutted south from Konzen and west to Krinkelt and Malmedy. The Ninth Division held the northern zone with its 47th C.T. defending from Konzen to before Alzen and the 39th C.T. stretched south of Alzen for three miles.

* * * *

IT WAS on the high ground southeast of Kalterherberg that Technical Sergeant Peter J. Dalessondro of the 39th Infantry's Company *E* displayed the *Extraordinary Heroism* which earned him the nation's highest combat award.

Sergeant Dalessondro was a platoon sergeant and his platoon had the mission of holding an important road junction on the high ground which bounds dismal Kalterherberg. The calendar read December 22nd—a day when elements of the veteran German spearheading units were attempting once again to crack the northern shoulder of the bulge. They saturated the area with heavy artillery and mortar fire preparatory to launching a 450-man assault upon the sergeant's *green* platoon. Cessation of this barrage was followed by an all-out enemy drive, aimed at overwhelming the position.

The American platoon reeled back from the strong attack and Sergeant Dalessondro, knowing that his men were becoming disorganized, moved among the soldiers with words of encouragement and finally inspired them to hold. He worked his way to an observation post which was in an exposed position and under enemy fire. From here he adjusted mortar fire upon the enemy hordes, firing his rifle and guiding the defense. The 450 Germans were repelled but came back later in the day in another powerful thrust.

Once again the sergeant rushed to the exposed mortar observation position and began to direct the defense. He ran out of rifle ammunition, crawled 30 yards across the fire-swept terrain to obtain a light machine gun, brought it back to the observation post and fired directly into the advancing enemy until the weapon jammed. Dalessondro worked feverishly on his weapon and got the machine gun to fire one more burst. With this string of shots he was able to kill four enemy soldiers who were about to murder a medic and two wounded patients in a nearby foxhole.

Without further ammunition, the sergeant was in a precarious position—but he refused to leave. Soon he was surrounded by the enemy. Dalessondro faced either death or capture . . . he chose to fight it out. The gallant American hurled hand grenades and kept calling for mortar fire closer and closer to his own position, while he covered the withdrawal of his platoon to a secondary line.

Masses of Germans swarmed around the brave sergeant as he was last heard to call for fire upon himself, "Okay, mortars, let me have it—right on this position!"

Sergeant Dalessondro saved his company from a disastrous defeat, but was captured in the effort. After the war he was released and returned to the United States to receive the *Congressional Medal of Honor* from President Truman.

* * * *

WHEN the Ninth journeyed south, the 60th C.T. became attached to the 104th Infantry Division, and the *Go-Devil* regiment held the Roer west of Dueren during its 24-hour sojourn with the *Timberwolves.* Then followed a tiresome orgy of travel. The 60th was ordered to join the 2nd Armored Division to the south. Cold December weather and the blocked conditions of the roads made travel difficult and hard on the nerves. The Go-Devils con-

THE MEN OF THE NINTH HELD

tacted the 2nd Armored finally near Warzee, Belgium, but were given urgent orders to return to the Ninth immediately. Detrucking only to eat a meal of *C* Rations, they set off again. After three days and three nights on the road, Colonel Van Houten's weary men rejoined the Ninth near Muetzenich on December 23rd. With the arrival of this combat team the Division was regrouped, and the traveling 60th assumed control of an area around the road center just north of Monschau.

December 24th was an extremely cold yet clear day. American air support was operative now and the enemy penetration had reached its maximum extent. Despite all German efforts the vital Elsenborn ridgeline continued to be held by the Americans, forcing the Sixth *S.S. Panzer* Army to reorganize.

There was little activity in the Ninth's sector on Christmas Day, but patrols were active and positions were improved. *Spam,* the G.I. *steak* instead of turkey was on the menu for many that day, although some lucky men had received gifts previously. But this white Christmas of 1944 was not the holiday season that the fighting men had seen pictured on pre-war German posters. The gay feeling was not there . . . thoughts winged their way homeward—of warm fires, the folks, the little woman, the kids. In miserable holes chopped out of the frozen ground the Ninth was spending its third Christmas overseas! How much longer could it last?

For the balance of 1944 the Germans sent over harassing and interdictory fire and dropped bombs on the 60th, making the last seven days of the year seem anything but a holiday week. Enemy footslogger strength, however, was waning from battering against the Allied stonewall, and that wall now was closing in on him. His bulge had boomeranged. What he had dreaded, the closing of the bulge at its jaws—Monschau and Echternach—was under way, and the salient was becoming a German-occupied pocket.

To the Ninth, at least, this turnabout gave some measure of rest. Although the patrolling and counter-battery missions continued, the regiments of the Ninth rotated units, giving them rest in the rear area and a chance to get warm. The various supporting services became better established, too.

As mentioned previously, a large portion of the credit for holding the enemy counter-offensive during late December of 1944 has been attributed to Americans who refused to budge at the Monschau-Elsenborn shoulder of the bulge. It was here that the Ninth was deployed and, with such flanking partners as the 1st Division, was able to hold on, while inflicting heavy losses upon the enemy. The *First U.S. Army Report of Operations* had this to say of that corner in its summary of the period:

Von Rundstedt had sacrificed the best part of four divisions . . . in his repeated attempts to assault the Elsenborn ridge and the Monschau area. Without the Monschau-Eupen and Malmedy-Verviers roads, he could not follow out his plan to commit II Panzer Corps, which still remained in reserve on the east flank of I SS Panzer Corps. Thus, his hopes of reaching Liege through Verviers were smashed by the stalwart resistance of the troops defending along the northern shoulder of the Gap and at St. Vith.

So on December 31st the German high command was faced with the grim reality that it had succeeded

NIGHT PATROL BRIEFING

only in upsetting the Allied timetable and simply had reprieved briefly its assured death sentence. Only the unforeseen could save Nazism now!

* * * *

JANUARY blew in, with the Ninth Infantry Division holding a line from the road center north of Konzen to the high ground east of Elsenborn. New Year's Eve had been spent under scattered enemy artillery and mortar fire, although the month proved to be one of light casualties along a fairly stabilized front.

During the month of January the outstanding problems of supply and evacuation were due to deep snow and freezing temperature. The non-availability of winterizing equipment made improvision necessary. Snow plows, toboggans, felt inner-soles and camouflage snow suits were made by service elements of the division. Charcoal was obtained for front-line troops to burn in improvised stoves. Raw wool found in local felt manufacturing plants was used to line foxholes.

—Ninth Division Report of Operations

Yes, American ingenuity was at work! The 709th Ordnance rushed to fabricate snow plows and tractor grousers and issued *Prestone*. In addition to their other duties, the 15th Engineers opened and operated a carpentry shop and a dressmaking shop, turning out toboggans for litters, cargo and machine guns, and snow suits for the infantry. And, in the midst of all that snow, 603,700 gallons of water were distributed to the men of the Ninth!

The line of the Ninth on January 1st was held by the 60th to the north, the 47th in the center and the 39th to the south; other units of the Division were astride roadblocks and protecting important points along the front. Patrolling continued and brought many interesting revelations. For one thing, German prisoners captured on these sorties were of the conviction that they feared the flesh-burning phosphorous shells of the U.S. Army even more than they did fragmentation shells. And, as for the new airburst methods employed by the American artillery—that was thought a *secret weapon*.

Field Marshal Karl Rudolf Gerd von Rundstedt's great gamble to smash the Allied invasion Armies failed for two reasons:

1. His panzer and infantry divisions never were able to swing north and capture Liege.
2. Von Rundstedt underestimated Lt. Gen. Omar Nelson Bradley's fighting men.

. . . Had von Rundstedt crashed through the American defenses on the northern flank of the salient the entire 1st Army, the American 9th and the British and Canadian Armies, would have been trapped.

And the American people can be grateful there were such veteran divisions as the 1st Infantry Division, the 9th Infantry Division, the 4th Infantry Division and the 3d Armored Division waiting to meet that massed assault. They had the "know how" with which to stop the drive 18 miles short of its goal and litter the frozen fields and roads with German dead and knocked-out tanks.

—Don Whitehead (*AP*)

Perhaps the enemy captured in battle thought this, but his brethren behind the Nazi lines continued to contest key points. This was discovered by one platoon of the 47th's 2nd Battalion and by Company *L* of the 39th Infantry, both of whom spent the first day of the new year in action. The *Raider* platoon was working its way to the west bank of the Schwalmbach in an effort to obtain an observation post south of Kalterherberg. That effort ignited opposition which came from approximately fifty dug-in Germans backed by ample overhead machine-gun fire—shot from American weapons captured during the enemy's advance. The foe had artillery support as well. Since the *Raiders* were outnumbered and under fire from three sides by an enemy who counterattacked fiercely, the patrol was forced to withdraw under cover of smoke.

Equally adverse opposition greeted the attack of the 39th. Company *L*, with three tanks in support, jumped off in an attempt to push the enemy over the Schwalmbach. It by-passed a German strongpoint on the height of Hohe Mark and returned later in the day to flank this position. Although three machine guns and one mortar emplacement were knocked out by the *Falcons*, the enemy stubbornly held his top ground. One American tank (after it had become separated from the other two) was knocked out of action by German anti-tank rocket fire, and for the time being Hohe Mark remained in enemy hands.

Throughout the following week, the cold haze-covered ground surrounding this tank was the scene of many skirmishes. The enemy was emplaced and dug in all around the vehicle and several attempts to knock him out failed. The Germans held on desperately, despite the destruction of their guns, mortars and other weapons. Finally on January 6th, the 39th's 1st Battalion took over the positions of the 3rd Battalion and, after contacting the enemy on Hohe Mark, sent out a strong combat patrol which succeeded in kicking them off. The next day showed the reason for the Germans offering so much resistance on this ground—here was observation along the Percenbach Valley to Kalterherberg as well as a way of approaching the Kalterherberg-Elsenborn road.

* * * *

WITH the halting of the German advance came a series of counterblows by the First and Third Armies (by the First to regain Houffalize and vicinity). On January 3rd the First Army launched an offensive along a 25-mile front aimed at the enemy's center. These attacks to narrow the enemy corridor resulted in a gradual shortening of his lines. Concurrent with the main drive the forces holding the Monschau hinge waged small diversionary actions designed to mislead the Germans regarding the limits of the overall drive.

A diversionary attack against the town of Konzen was made by the 60th Infantry on January 3rd, and

DIGGING OUT

during the same day 60th mine-laying attachments (including Company *C*, 15th Engineers) spread 1,000 mines in front of the 38th Cavalry Squadron. (This same combination had laid 1,000 mines the day previous.)

At the same time the 60th was hitting at Konzen, the 39th and 47th Regiments also were keeping the enemy notified that the Ninth was still very much there by placing the area of the Schwalmbach and Hohe Mark under fire. In the 47th Infantry sector, the simulated general attack was an excellent success. Germans were forced to abandon commanding ground south of the 2nd Battalion sector, as well as several well-emplaced field fortifications. The enemy lost 26 captured and many dead, while the 47th casualties were one killed and nine wounded. This action was fought in terrain where the visibility seldom was more than 300 yards during the day—usually much less.

By the 5th the Germans were back on their feet it seemed, for the air was filled with their artillery. But until the end of the month, the actions along the Ninth's long front seemed to follow a patrolling and harassing pattern.

* * * *

FACING the 39th Infantry during a great deal of mid-January was the 990th *Volksgrenadier* (VG) Regiment. Its commander was a typical Nazi gangster type—young (35 years of age), be-medalled, brutal, apparently without fear and totally devoid of morals or scruples. He was Lt. Colonel Bremm, a recipient of Nazidom's highest award *The Knight's Cross,* with an Oak Leaf cluster to boot.

When the 39th was attacking around Hohe Mark, part of the enemy's dogged resistance was due to the fact that Colonel Bremm was standing behind his men on the front line with a drawn pistol. His soldiers were ordered to hold out at any cost or suffer the alternative of death from their commander's hand.

Despite his blustering attitude, however, Bremm did not know who was in front of him or where they were located. Two reconnaissance patrols were dispatched daily . . . but still he knew nothing. Finally, in desperation, the regimental commander hit upon a supposedly foolproof method of obtaining the desired information.

Bremm picked a sergeant who recently had joined the outfit. The non-com had a prison record, which was useful in Bremm's psychology. He promised the sergeant promotion, decoration, a 21-day furlough and extra cigarettes and chocolate if he would lead a small patrol and capture one American prisoner. The men participating also were to receive extra rations. Wilcke, the sergeant, was to pick his men, the time of departure and to arrange for other details.

As Wilcke left Colonel Bremm he was told, ". . . I want at least one American soldier. No matter whether he is wounded or not, I'll find a way to make him tell me what I want to know!"

Wilcke chose a four man group. Two were picked because they desired to desert. The sergeant was not so sure of the other two men, so he selected 1 P.M. as his departure time . . . to make sure that the 39th Infantry sentry they were trying to capture would see them first! From there on, the PW Report of G-2 tells it best:

"As the patrol was slowly approaching one of our sentries, the sergeant advised all men to lay down their arms and go up to the American soldier with their hands over their head in order to rush him and take him back to the Colonel. The sergeant did not intend to do that at all but thus convinced the other two members of the patrol of his honest

Citation by the Belgian Government

(Order of the Day)

From the 20th of December 1944 until the 26th of January 1945 during the German offensive in the Ardennes, the 9th Infantry Division of the United States Army and the attached units were assigned the mission to defend the northern flank of the counter-offensive, driven (under the direction) by the 5th Corps of the United States Army in the sector Eupen (Belgium)-Montjoie (Germany). Fighting continuously, the enemy was incapable to expend the break through. After the enemy attack was sealed off successfully, the 9th Infantry Division of the United States Army and the attached units began the counter attack and forced the enemy to abandon the Belgian territory in this zone.

LET'S GO!

intentions. The entire patrol was captured and Bremm still does not know anything about the 39th Infantry!"

Bremm and his kind had not only over estimated the loyalty of their own men, but also had underestimated the Allied will to win. In their addled minds they had no reason to believe that American troops would wage a stubborn stand as had been the magnificent achievement of the 101st Airborne and 10th Armored Divisions at Bastogne or the 4th Armored Division which relieved them and trapped a German corps in the process! Hitler and Nazism were doomed as long as units like the 2nd Infantry Division headquarters could hold for a few precious moments on the Elsenborn ridge, and as long as veteran regiments like those of the Ninth and 1st were available to stem the tide at Monschau and Elsenborn's *hot corner*.

These and other units had stopped the foe in his tracks . . . the British XXX Corps and the French along the Meuse had a part in the victory, too. Even the 376th AAA (AW) Battalion under Lt. Colonel C. O. Burns had abandoned its normal role and aided the Ninth Division to plug the line. Thus after January 15th the Allies were attacking successfully to seal off the enemy within the bulge, which was indicative of things to come. Von Rundstedt had had enough and so had his troops. The order to withdraw was given . . . while the weather remained bad, the Allied air support could not do too much damage and the offensive could go into reverse. The old grimy footsloggers and their companions in arms had done it again, done it with smashing success!

* * * *

THE month of January coldly entered its last half. In foxholes and improvised shelters, the Ninth held out against blizzards, trench foot, frostbite and against the frequent bursts of German artillery. As the terriffic blizzard of January 19-20 was chilling everyone to the marrow, reports came into the Division command post near Eupen that the enemy was retreating to the east. On the 20th, patrolling increased vigorously to the front and flanks, as the Ninth Division probed to ascertain the enemy's true disposition and strength. Meanwhile, preparations were made for future operations, as the patrolling continued and while Kalterherberg, Monschau, Konzen, Imgenbroich, Hoefen, Heisterhaus, Hohe Mark and Menzerath shivered in the deep snow.

By the end of the month German troops were happy to leave with their lives what remained of the bulge. Von Rundstedt was about to be deposed again and Hitler's stock took another tailspin. Only the diehards and the uninformed believed in final victory for the *Fatherland* now—the remainder of Germany's population just waited for the inevitable doom toward which their Nazi leaders were driving.

There was no doubt on either side that the Allied offensive had been set back at least six weeks by the Ardennes push. But now the pause was over . . . the Allies were going to give the Germans a lesson on how to really break through. The well-rested men of the *Octofoil* were ordered regrouped for the long-awaited American cyclone which shortly was to sweep across the German nation. Back in the rear areas, units of the Ninth in reserve had trained for a new type of warfare—the night attack. Now they were girding their loins for that big drive which everyone hoped would take them to the east . . . and victory.

January 30th was the day set for the new offensive. *Winter Stalemate* was melting into the thickly forested regions of the Ardennes and the Eifel. Germany had lost the gamble and the winners gathered up their equipment—they were going forward to claim their winnings.

Der Fuehrer was on his last legs!

* * *

Section X photography credits: Page 287 by 39th Infantry; all others are Official U.S. Army Signal Corps Photos.

GI'S INSPECT CAPTURED GERMAN MORTAR ▶

Section XI

Attack and Pursuit

Rhineland

KAPUT . . . that was the German Ardennes counter-offensive on January 29, 1945. It was apparent that the enemy had used a great deal, if not most, of his carefully husbanded reserves—and without any appreciable measure of success. His concurrent drive to Strasbourg had been halted ten miles short of its objective, and the Colmar Pocket (Sixth Army Group's *Battle of the Bulge*) was becoming cleared. The result of these failures was a dearth of troops with which Hitler could prop up his Western Front. Within a short time a new Russian offensive in the east was to confuse the enemy further as to disposition of his manpower.

Der Fuehrer's once-vaunted *Panzer* armies were again in shreds, and in desperation the *Wehrmacht* called its uncommitted troops from Norway to fill the gaps. These combined with the newly formed *Volkssturmer* and other make-shift battalions to build up a slowly retreating line. Their mission at first was to hold before the Roer dams, and failing that to flood the countryside with this massive content of water.

With the retreat of the enemy from the Bulge, the logical undertaking for the Americans was a continuation of their delayed winter offensive. That, indeed, was the order of the day.

At this time the Ninth Division had completed its regrouping and was preparing to enter into the smashing drive which was to carry the Central Group of Armies out of the Ardennes and into the east. Beyond the rugged mountains, thick woods and swift rivers lay the ultimate goal of this push—the River Rhine. Tremendous obstacles stood in the way. There were the Roer dams and the forbidding Monschau Forest; snow was upon the ground, and when it melted, the discovery of debris and shrapnel rising out of the roads caused a serious tire problem. It was not going to be easy . . . but what infantryman has it easy?

On the 29th, the 60th C.T. was positioned around Hoefen and to the north of Monschau, the 39th C.T. was in the vicinity of Kalterherberg and the 47th occupied positions near Hoefen and Alzen. Troopers of the Ninth Recon were attached to the 39th Infantry, and the 86th Chemical Battalion furnished some of its effective 4.2mm mortars in support of the Division.

Tuesday, January 30th was jump-off day for the V Corps. Its initial objectives in this new attack were capture and seizure of the key towns of Gemuend and Schleiden, which control the roadnets and area south of the Urft Lake—as well as protecting the First Army northern flank. Upon completion of the aforementioned missions, V Corps was to push out and capture the ancient citadel of Zuelpich to the northeast. An intermediate objective, and one which was most important to the conduct of the war, was the capture and seizure of Dam No. 5—the Urfttalsperre Dam.

At first the three infantry divisions of the Corps—the Ninth, 2nd and 99th—were to spearhead the drive, with the Ninth to the north and the 2nd on the extreme southern flank. The 99th was to be *pinched out* early in the operation, and as the sector narrowed, the Ninth and 2nd were to thrust east-

> Three more First Army divisions—the Ninth, 99th and Second—jumped into the assault on the Siegfried Line today and made advances up to four miles in bitter cold and deep drifted snow. By nightfall the fixed Siegfried fortifications were only about three miles away.
>
> —*The Stars and Stripes*

INTO THE OFFENSIVE

ward in a coordinated drive. Perhaps the most far-reaching assignment for the Ninth was contained in its instructions to deny the enemy use of Dam No. 5. Attainment of this objective was of such consequence as to influence the entire strategy of the Corps offensive.

* * * *

WHEN January 30th rolled around, the Ninth smashed forward into the dreary Monschau Forest. Here was the beginning of the Division's night attacks . . . which, according to General Craig, became so popular with the infantry (because of fewer casualties) that they were preferred in comparison with daytime warfare.

On that icy Tuesday this new kind of attack began. The light and surprised opposition which greeted the offensive increased somewhat by the hour; however, the Division garnered all of its assigned objectives. *Go-Devil* footsloggers advanced to the heights and town of Rohren, which is about one mile and a half to the east of Monschau. The 60th's 2nd Battalion, with two companies in the attack had worked well toward the town by 6:45 A.M. Backed by one platoon of tanks and another of tank destroyers, the 2nd closed in on Rohren, and when watches read 9:15 A.M. the battalion had wrested the place from the German 62nd Division. Meanwhile, the 3rd Battalion advanced 300 yards and stopped before a strongly defended pillbox. Company *I* eliminated this resistance and the battalion plodded ahead, discovering and reducing many more such obstacles as the day wore on.

The *Wehrmacht* counterattacked with armor against Rohren at 2 P.M., but the 2nd Battalion broke up the enemy's attempt with some tank and tank destroyer support of its own. Cessation of this encounter signaled a new advance for which the regiment pointed its spearheads toward Widdau, the Roer River town which rose out of the snow-covered ground less than a mile to the northeast. Here contact was to be made with elements of the 5th Armored Division.

As the *Go-Devils* probed and assaulted along the northern part of the Division zone of advance that morning, the 47th C.T. jumped off to capture Alzen—after which the leading 2nd and 3rd *Raider* Battalions headed eastward against small-arms, mortar and artillery fire to reach far into the winter-covered forest by late evening. Throughout the day the deep, drifted snow had hindered the regiment's movement more than had enemy resistance.

By nightfall the Ninth had chalked up gains of up to 3,000 yards, and Division frontline units were across the open heights below the Roer (the Rohren-Hoefen-Alzen clearing). The victorious first day was ended and the night fighters prepared to inaugurate yet another.

The Ninth Division pushed on inside Germany to Widdau, on the Roer east of Monschau.

—Austin Bealmear (AP)

On the 31st the successfully begun attack of the Ninth proceeded on its way east. Widdau was the main goal of this early Wednesday thrust, as was the seizure of wooded areas, mopping up of pillboxes and the attainment of the high ground near the Wahlerscheid road junction.

The 60th used its 2nd Battalion—which had been relieved by the 1st in Rohren—to attack Widdau. It was several hours before dawn when these *Go-Devils* surprised the Nazis, and many enemy troops were overwhelmed during their sleep in dug-in positions on the hill southwest of the town. There was a halt momentarily, then after a ten-battalion artillery saturation, Company *E* entered Widdau at 6:45 A.M. By 10:20 A.M. the battalion had organized the town and GIs were clearing out rubble in order to permit the opening of a roadway for jeep travel. Following its consolidation the 2nd made contact with friendly units to the north. A short while later the 102nd Cavalry was directed to relieve the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 60th, and the *Go-Devils* went into Division reserve.

Deep snow held the *Raiders* to a succession of pillbox actions, and it remained for the 39th C.T. to make the other big Division gains of the day. To the southeast of recently captured Alzen, the *Falcons* caught the enemy unaware by going through the almost impassable terrain of that vicinity in their attack. *AAA-O* once again proved a fitting title for the 39th as it shoved out the Division lines to the Wueste Bruck headwaters and the heights thereabouts. That placed the *Falcons* in position to launch a blow against the Wahlerscheid region.

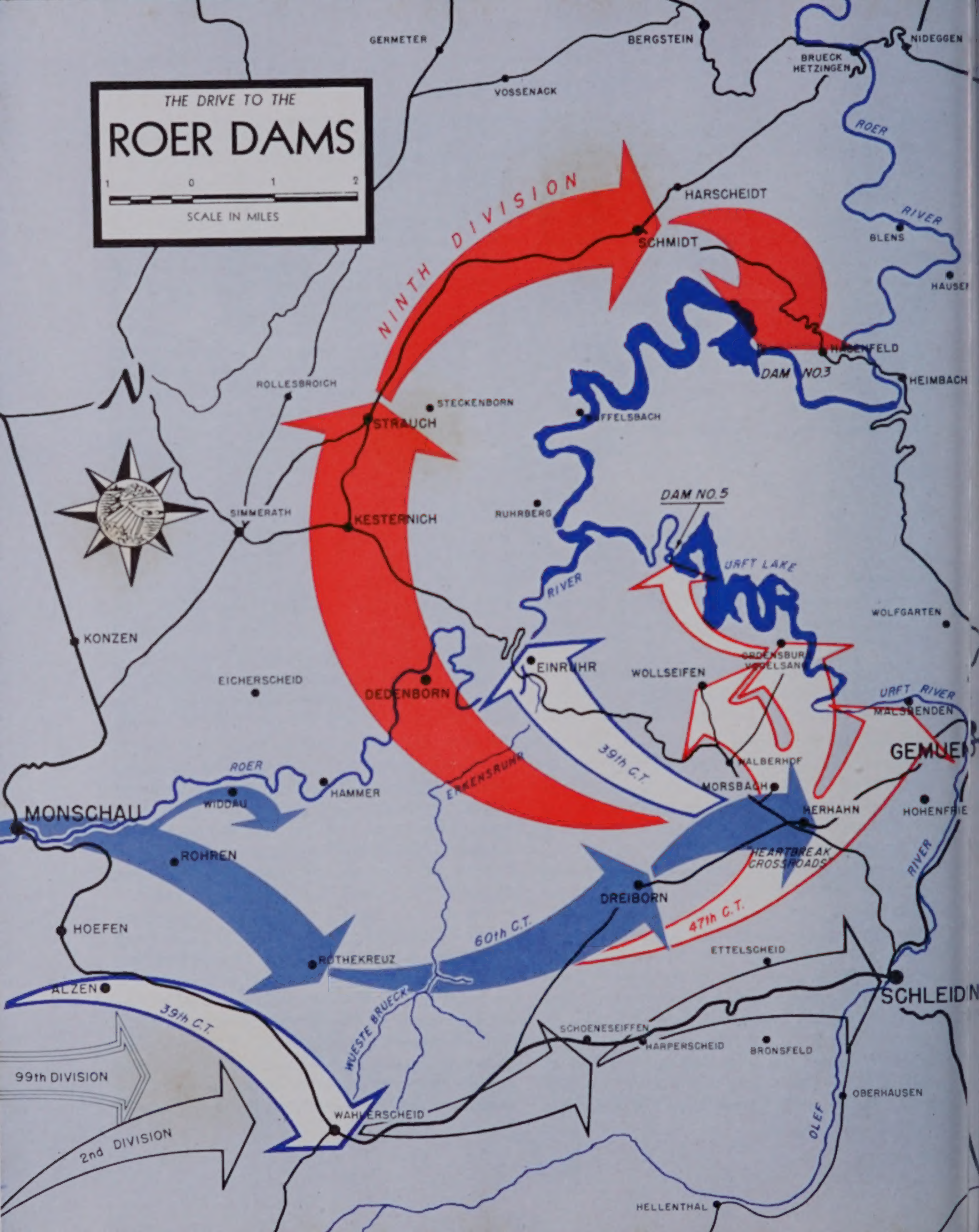
* * * *

Elements of the U.S. Ninth Division were converging from the northwest on the road junction of Wahlerscheid, five miles southeast of Monschau, which the Americans won in a bitter fight last December, just before the opening of the German drive.

—Boyd D. Lewis (UP)

JANUARY briskly gave way to cold February, but (as usual) the doughs up front were not interested in the date. Marching relentlessly to the east the 39th C.T., with the aid of the *Raider* 3rd Battalion, drove on to capture the key road junction of Wahlerscheid *(Hell's Corner)* and the rising ground to the east. It was only upon completion of this mission that the 2nd Division would be able to move north to the road junction and attack east abreast of the Ninth. Thus the taking of this objective was of immediate importance for continuation of both the Corps and Army plans in this sector.

The Germans realized the value of Wahlerscheid and had planted innumerable *Riegel* and *Shu* mines in the area; moreover, their tenacious and foot-contesting defense attested the strong desire which they possessed to hold this road junction. Against this stubborn enemy was teamed the 2nd Battalion of the 39th and the 47th's 3rd Battalion. The latter moved abreast of the 2nd in order to protect its left flank and the two units proceeded rapidly against strong small-arms fire. This combination cut the Wahler-


THE DRIVE TO THE
ROER DAMS
1 0 1 2
SCALE IN MILES
N
GERMETER
BERGSTEIN
NIDEGGEN
BRUECK
HETZINGEN
VOSSENACK
ROER
HARSCHEIDT
NINTH DIVISION
SCHMIDT
RIVER
BLENS
HAUSE
HASENFELD
DAM NO.3
HEIMBACH
ROLLESBROICH
STECKENBORN
STRAUCH
RUFFELSBACH
DAM NO.5
SIMMERATH
KESTERNICH
RUHRBERG
URFT LAKE
RIVER
WOLFGARTEN
KONZEN
EICHERSCHEID
EINRUHR
WOLLSEIFEN
ORDENSBURG
VOGELSANG
DEDENBORN
URFT RIVER
MALSBENDEN
39th C.T.
GEMUE
ERKENSRUHR
WALBERHOF
ROER
HAMMER
MORSBACH
MONSCHAU
WIDDAU
HERHAHN
HOHENFRIE
ROHREN
HEARTBREAK CROSSROADS
RIVER
DREIBORN
47th C.T.
HOEFEN
60th C.T.
ROTHEKREUZ
ETTELSCHEID
ALZEN
SCHLEIDEN
39th C.T.
WUESTE BRUECK
SCHOENESEIFFEN
HARPERSCHEID
BRONSFELD
99th DIVISION
OLEF
OBERHAUSEN
WAHLERSCHEID
2nd DIVISION
HELLENTHAL

scheid-Harperscheid road net and one more difficult task was nearing completion for the men of the *Octofoil.*

There was no letup for the Germans now. The 2nd Battalion reduced 12 pillboxes and 20 log bunkers in the actions which followed, and on February 2nd the 39th was successful in capturing the strongpoint at Forsthaus Wahlerscheid—where enemy defenses proved to be most elaborate. These fortifications consisted of heavy three-room concrete bunkers, with walls measuring over 40 inches solid and a roof approximately 45 inches thick. The pillboxes were camouflaged by a covering wooden cabin; and concrete and log machine-gun bunkers, log shelters and barbed wire protected the neighboring trenches and lined foxholes. All-in-all, the Germans had developed a stumbling block which was difficult to traverse, although one which fell speedily to the veteran pillbox fighters of the 39th Infantry.

Where You Lead We Follow

Two thousand yards north, across the wintry hills and through the blood-stained forests the 60th was having its hands full. Deep snow, enemy mine fields and severe hand-to-hand fighting were capped by a robust enemy counterattack as the *Go-Devils* struggled through the drifts to clear out the wooded area on the Division left flank. Foremost fighting of the day centered around Rothekreuz, a village which overlooks a small winding valley whose floor is a small stream. The 60th reduced the strongpoint at Rothekreuz, but the enemy launched a vicious counterattack in retaliation. Although this smashing countermotion was repulsed, the Germans retained hold on one of the village buildings for the night.

Simultaneous with this advance the 47th breezed onto the high ground east of the main Hoefen-Wahlerscheid road. At this moment the Ninth Division was far forward from its original jump-off positions and that posed another problem for the supply men and medics. Slushy snow made evacuation of wounded and resupply difficult, and it was only through the use of toboggans, *Weasels* and such devices as heating pads for casualties that normal operations were carried on by these services.

During February 1-2, the Ninth Division had *pinched out* the 99th Division when the 60th Infantry contacted elements of the 2nd Division about three miles southwest of Dreiborn. By February 2nd the V Corps was hitting to the northeast with a two-divisional punch; the Ninth was to the north and the 2nd to the south as per earlier plan. Darkness found the Ninth Division reaching out for Dreiborn, with the 60th Infantry on the heights of a small stream approximately 2,000 yards west of that battered town. This was a day in which the Ninth had carried its drive out of the Monschau Forest in some areas, and it was a day which netted gains of as much as four kilometers. The 47th had reached the heights 1,000 yards southwest of Hammer and the 60th was preparing to assault Dreiborn in another one of those eerie and effective night attacks . . . fo reveryone the morrow held promise of more action.

* * * *

Troops of our Ninth Infantry Division waded the icy waters of medieval moats today and into a fourteenth-century castle to trap a German garrison trying to block their progress through the Siegfried Line.

This turreted old pile stands on a bluff 700 feet high just east of Dreiborn, seven and a half miles east of Monschau, and it dominates a highway running northeast from Dreiborn.

The village of Dreiborn, which sits on a promontory in the midst of a depression in the surrounding hills, looked romantically medieval, also, in better days but it had been bombed to ruins in December.

—Harold Denny (N.Y. TIMES)

SATURDAY was the 3rd and the offensive was less than a week old. Nevertheless, the same old weary feeling of combat was gnawing at the bones of the be-whiskered footsloggers. Drifted snow added more weariness to the limbs of the 60th Infantrymen who were navigating the desolate fields

DREARY DREIBORN

around Dreiborn. All was dark as the *Go-Devils* crunched forward slowly; the time was 4 A.M. and a memorable day was in store.

Since 2 A.M. the 60th had been moving into position for an overwhelming onslaught against Dreiborn. The armor had been left to the rear in a ravine, and everyone was on foot so as to keep the attack a surprise. Colonel Van Houten chose the 1st Battalion of Captain (Major) Ed Waters (who had taken command of the 1st when Major Leo C. Williamson was wounded at Rothekruez) and the 2nd Battalion of Lt. Colonel Quentin R. *Hardtack* Hardage to launch the silent and simultaneous engulfment of Dreiborn. The main street of the darkened town was designated the boundary for the two battalions in this *Go-Devil* night sortie . . . surprise was the keynote.

Some doughboys were attired in white snow suits and all were bundled in the garb of winter as the two battalions worked their way up to the outskirts of the objective. At 4:30 A.M. the magnificently-executed maneuver shifted into high gear and the Americans surged forward to envelop the town. Many of the enemy were surprised to find these *Go-Devils* at their flank and rear—one such company could not swing its guns around in time and so it capitulated. Other erstwhile ***supermen*** gave up as well. With the area alerted and the element of surprise gone, the 60th's supporting tanks and tank destroyers were called up. Before they arrived, however, the town was taken and those of the enemy who were not already captive retreated east to the *burg* (castle) to make a final stand.

It was 5 A.M. now, slowly growing light. The battle switched to the reinforced castle, and for the next twelve hours a fight raged which proved as difficult as the taking of Dreiborn had been easy.

Frenzerberg and Merode had had their moats, but in each case a drawbridge was utilized for entrance. At Dreiborn Castle it was necesssary to wade through the icy, slush-filled moat to reach the enemy. Artillery support was impossible, since friendly casualties would have equalled those of the enemy. A hasty glance at the situation called for use of two main infantry weapons . . . the rifle and the hand grenade. And so began a passage-to-passage, room-to-room battle the infantry way.

Grim-faced GIs splashed through the water and assaulted the fortified castle. It was a slow and dangerous job with risks at every corner. Once inside, the 60th's men began a grenade and small-arms fight which netted nearly 300 prisoners by nightfall. The vicious and tiresome task was completed at 5:10 P.M., and the hungry, worn-out victors looked as haggard as did the vanquished. Indeed . . . they were!

Here again, experience and intestinal fortitude paid off. With the seizure of this castle the road was open to the northeast and the 60th's reserve battalion, the 3rd, was called up for yet another task . . . as the drive continued with typical Ninth Division tenacity.

Beyond Dreiborn lay Herhahn and its crossroads. This vital communications center was the objective of the 3rd Battalion as it passed through the weary troops at Dreiborn and headed to the northeast. By 7:10 P.M. the Herhahn *Heartbreak* crossroads and the town of Herhahn were secured. The seizure placed the 3rd Battalion in possession of a road net that connected with both intermediate Corps objectives (Gemuend and Schleiden) and which held the key to the Urft River. In the aftermath of this capture the 39th Infantry passed through Dreiborn and reached the vicinity of Herhahn. The *AAA-O* men began outposting Herhahn and the *Go-Devils* got their second wind.

For the *Raiders* it had been a day of reducing strongpoints and clearing woods. The rough, hilly terrain bounding the little farm village of Einruhr fell to the 47th's 3rd Battalion after the defenders waged a gallant but losing fight with small arms backed by artillery support. As darkness blanketed the earth, Einruhr was secured firmly by the battalion.

> During these battles for the Roer dams, the Ninth Infantry Division learned and brought to a high peak of perfection the art of night attacks. Over trackless snow fields, through dense forests and into silent pitchblack towns these attacks were uniformly successful and culminated in such victories as the capture of Rohren and Widdau (with only one man wounded by a sniper) and the capture of Dreiborn and Herhahn over routes believed impossible by the Germans.
>
> —*Colonel J. G. Van Houten*

* * * *

IT IS interesting to note that the water capacity of the five Roer dams was 148,650,000 cubic meters. Such an immense storage of water posed a threat of no little consequence in the scheme of the American offensive. The entire Roer valley facing the U.S. First and Ninth Armies could have been flooded by the Germans . . . particularly if the enemy retained control of the dams. In such a case, if the American troops already had crossed the river they would have been engulfed by a sudden unleashing of the vast reservoir—which was capable of flooding the countryside as far as Holland. The story was the same in February of 1945 as it had been the preceding October. No offensive over the Roer could be undertaken successfully without control of the dams by the Allies.

Early February thus was to prove important, since in the period which ended on the 12th these massive dams were to be taken by the Allies, and the two largest of these were prizes of the Ninth Infantry Division.

On February 4th the immediate objective of the Ninth was seizure of the Urfttalsperre Dam—second largest of the five and containing a storage of *13,000 million gallons of water.* The Ninth's G-2 had declared that "the effect of the sudden release of this tremendous weight of water would be catastrophic" and that bordered on the edge of an understatement!

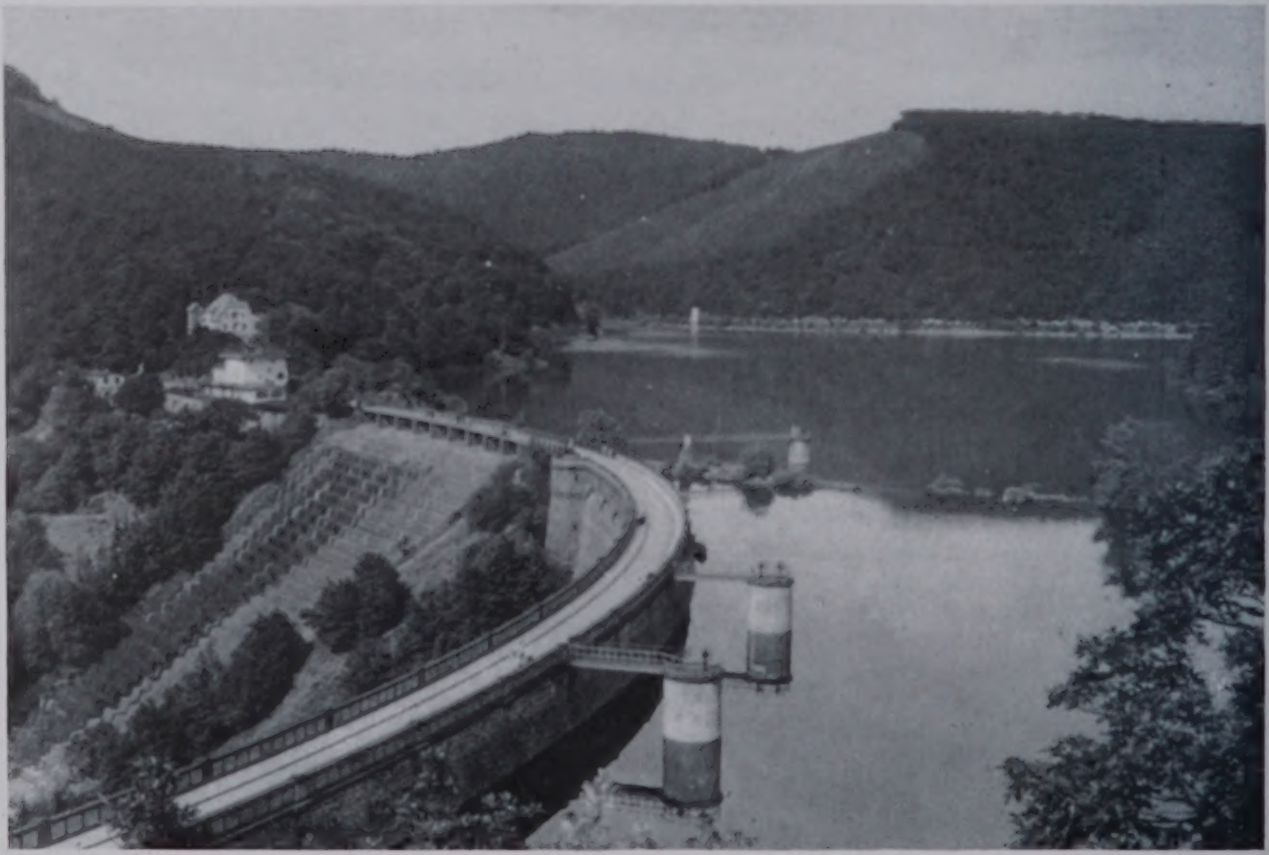
It was on this self-same February 4th that the attack of the Ninth continued without letup. Grenade-wearing GIs escorted caravans of long-coated German prisoners over the *Weasel*-tracked roads leading out of Dreiborn. In the opposite direction, the Ninth Division pushed to the east and north over slushy roads and rolling snowfields.

The night previous had witnessed the beginning of the 39th's re-entry into the spearhead. During the early morning of the 4th, the 39th Infantry continued its relief of the 60th on line. Simultaneously, a German counterattack was beginning to brew and it struck in spurts at first. The *AAA-O* regiment was passing its 1st Battalion through the 60th's 3rd Battalion at Herhahn when the Ninthmen were subjected to a peppering of enemy small-arms fire. At 2 A.M. four or five German tanks appeared from the southeast and fired on the 39th. Soon afterward two self-propelled guns approached Herhahn and brought the Americans under direct fire. The counterattack had begun in earnest.

American heavy firepower was not caught napping. The armored threat south of Herhahn was broken up by the Ninth and 2nd Divartys and Corps artillery within range, while a subsequent counterattack was repulsed by the 39th with bazookas, antitank guns and more artillery. It was getting lighter now and the 39th pushed on to Morsbach, where its riflemen chased the enemy out of that town and turned the German counterthrust into an enemy rout. Despite the foe's dogged resistance, he was forced to the banks of the Urft River . . . where the dominant ground was wrested from his grasp.

Since the Americans controlled the heights, the *Wehrmacht* troops decided that discretion should rule their actions . . . they attempted to reach the

CAPTURED GERMAN FILM SHOWS DAM No. 5



IT WAS LIKE A SHOOTING GALLERY

far shore. As the Nazis undertook their escape, the 39th's Company *L* took up positions on the high ground and literally fired *everything in the book* at the retreating Germans. Caution, cover and concealment were thrown to the winds as footsloggers revelled in a field day. Scenes reminiscent of shooting gallery days occurred while the enemy did his best to withdraw over the river.

* * * *

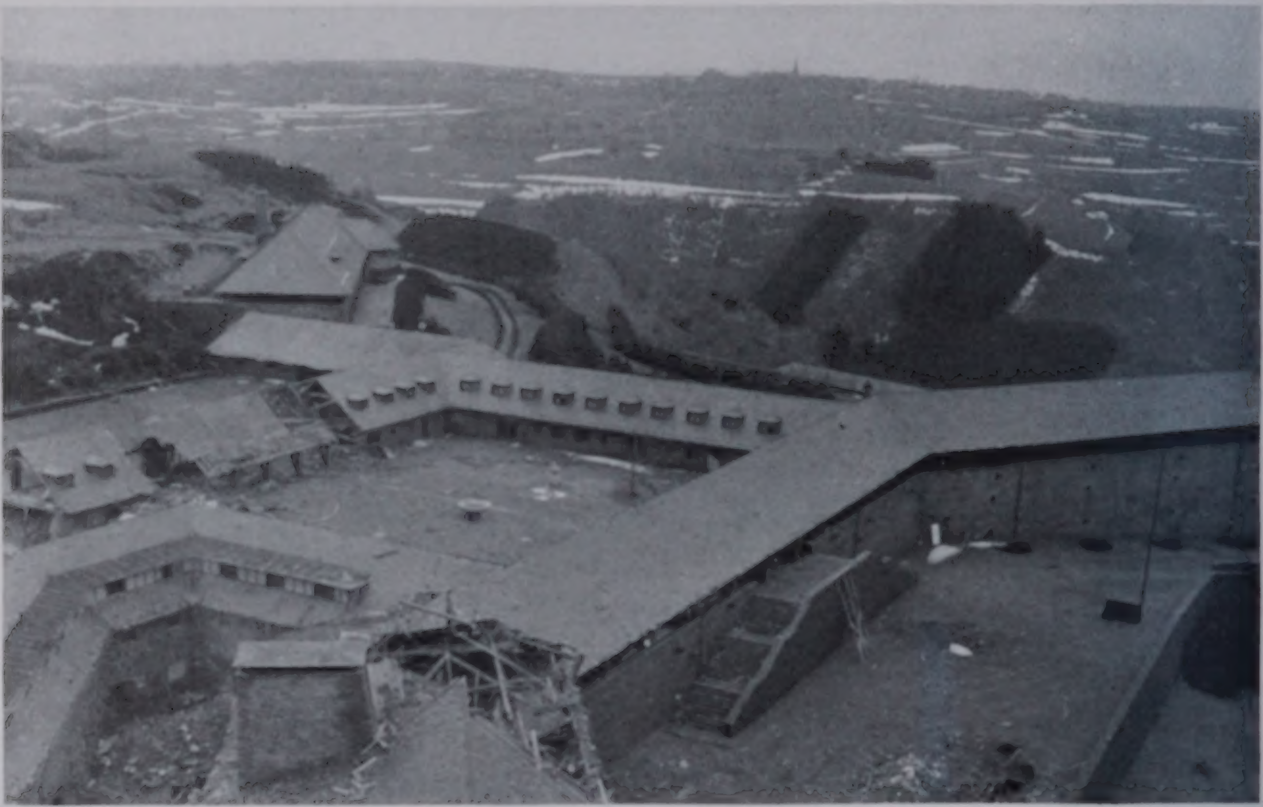
The 47th Inf. Regt. of the Ninth Div., piercing the second Siegfried Line captured Einruhr, then pushed five miles to the shores of Urfttalsperre Lake. On the way these men captured the Ordensburg Vogelsang training camp for Nazi party leaders at Wollseifen. —*The Stars and Stripes*

Last week no superman strutted in Burg Vogelsang. The castle's 4-ft. walls echoed only the snores of weary GIs and the clatter of the U.S. Ninth Infantry Division's mess kits. —*TIME*

RISING out of the iced, black waters of the Urftstausee are steep, ball-topped mountains. Midst the floating layers of stringed fog, Adolf Hitler built his Ordensburg . . . his *One Thousand Year Reich* school for fuehrers. The first of a series of *Leader Schools,* Ordensburg Vogelsang had a strange, mythological atmosphere, characteristic of Wagnerian music. On February 4, 1945, however, Wagner was to change to Gershwin, Berlin and *boogie-woogie.*

Early in the day, *Raiders* of the 1st Battalion beat their way into the town of Vogelsang, capturing an enemy regimental command post in operation, complete with adjutant and sergeant major. Pressing upward toward the citadel of Nazism, the battalion grabbed the infamous Ordensburg Vogelsang. Resistance was light and the students were long-since gone. GI visitors overran the grounds and tramped where the big-wigs of Nazidom had strode in triumph . . . now the once-glamorized Ordensburg was in possession of the *Raiders.*

On the very balcony where Hitler had addressed the inspired young leaders who were to rule his conquered world, doughboys set up machine guns and fired at retreating Nazis across the Urft. Fitting,



ORDENSBURG WAS KAPUT

indeed, was the end of this tyrannical symbol—destroyed by freedom-loving Americans.

Meanwhile, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions teamed up to take the town of Wollseifen. Here, too, the enemy was overcome easily and the stage was set for the final blow of the day, when much sought Urfttalsperre Dam—objective of two corps during four bloody months of fighting—fell to the *Raiders*.

Swinging northward after the capture of the school at Vogelsang, Company *A* thrust toward the dam, itself, and seized this massive reservoir—the first of the huge dams to fall to the Allies. One company had achieved what previously would have required several divisions.

The Urft Dam was to have been blown by the enemy troops under the direction of a Lt. Adam of the 62nd German Infantry Division. As happened a month later at the Ludendorff Bridge, something went wrong. The lieutenant had a guard company of Poles and Upper Silesians as his command and they were supposed to fire twice if the Americans came. They came . . . and the Poles, seeing that they were meant to be suicide troops (something they did not relish), gave no signal—except to surrender. Adam and his dam both escaped unscathed, the latter and the Poles remaining in American hands!

The Ninth Inf. Div. put patrols into Malsbenden, 500 yards east of Gemuend on the Urft River, anchor point of the Siegfried Line in that sector. The patrols, from the 47th Inf., found numerous German strongpoints with automatic weapons in the town.

—The Stars and Stripes

The 5th was a day of consolidation and patrolling. While *Raider* patrols entered Malsbenden, mopping up continued east to the river in the Division sector, positions were improved and higher ground continued to be occupied. German artillery fell intermittently, particularly on the 47th's 1st Battalion. The only large-scale action of the day, however, took place in the 39th zone. Here the regiment launched a dawn drive to eject enemy troops remaining on the high ground west of the Olef River and south of the Urft River overlooking Gemuend. In their attack to flush out the regiment's zone to the rivers, the *AAA-O* companies found ample evidence that the enemy still was willing to wage a battle when he had to.

Once again, on Tuesday, February 6th the 39th Infantry carried on the offensive action for the Division. Civilians were given a *reveille* call at 5:30 A.M. when Company *A* decided to eliminate the resistance in the buildings to their front at Hohenfried—a small village about one and a half miles east of Herhahn. Many civilians were apprehended along with the 43 military prisoners.

Visibility was extremely poor during the night of February 7-8. Nonetheless, it was at 8 P.M. on the night of the 7th that the very effective *artificial moonlight* was tested in the area held by the 47th Infantry. Despite the bad weather, men discovered that they could see 50 yards ahead that night with the aid of these powerful beams.

* * * *

SINCE October, four American divisions had been torn to shreds trying to capture Dam No. 3, the Schmidt (Schwammenauel) Dam. The enemy's excellent use of artillery had rendered direct assault a costly and almost impossible task. Yet it was a *must* assignment, as no advance could be made successfully over the Roer until the dam was taken. The Schmidt Dam had a capacity of *22,000 million gallons* and it controlled the flow of all other reservoirs in the area. Apparently it was impregnable to aerial and artillery bombardment, for Allied strategic bombers had been unable to dent it in past raids. That is understandable when it is realized that the dam is 300 meters wide at its base, 350 meters long, stands 68 meters high and is of excellent construction.

By the 7th the high ground commanding Schmidt had been captured and so was the town itself. Further advances had slowed down, nevertheless, and the enemy continued to retain control of Hasenfeld and Heimbach—the keys to any successful capture of the Schmidt Dam.

On the 8th General Craig was paying a mid-day visit to V Corps headquarters. Conditions of the roads in the First Army zone were so bad at the time that it took the Ninth's commander three hours to reach his destination instead of the usual one-half hour. When General Craig arrived at Corps, Major General (Lt. General) Clarence R. Huebner, the Corps commander was rather tense. General Hodges, the Army commander had just called General Huebner regarding the dam and had emphasized the immediate necessity of its capture.

During the previous day General Huebner had been at the front directing personally the attack against this objective. Here the 78th Division, with the 508th Parachute Infantry attached, was attacking a strongly entrenched and unyielding enemy on the ridge running through Schmidt. The battle had reached an impasse and the doughs of the 78th were tired and hard-hit from continuous action.

The Corps commander formerly had been commanding general of the 1st Infantry Division and he knew the capabilities of the Ninth. He asked General Craig how soon the latter could get a combat team to the Schwammenauel Dam area and General Craig replied that he could do it immediately. A hurried phone call was placed to Division headquarters, where Colonel Westmoreland the chief of staff was contacted. The ever-efficient Colonel took the necessary steps and by the time General Craig had returned from his visit to Corps headquarters, the leading elements of the Division already were on their way!

Five o'clock that evening found the Ninth moving to launch an attack upon the vicinity of Dam No. 3. The 60th C.T. led the motorized parade, and the 47th soon followed as a reserve regiment. The Ninth's sector in the Urft Lake region had been turned over to the 2nd Division, and the 39th C.T. (with the 34th F.A. Battalion) stayed in place, under control of the 2nd.

As the bulk of the Ninth pressed north, evening began to darken the way. At 9 P.M. the Division approached its area of attack and at this time it took over control of the 78th Division zone (Strauch-Steckenborn-Schmidt), including the attachment of two of that division's regiments, the 309th and 311th.

The Ninth's objectives were Hasenfeld and the high ground overlooking Dam No. 3, which added up to the mission of capturing the dam itself. Time of attack was set at five-thirty on the morning of February 9th and the 60th Infantry was designated to spearhead the drive.

As noted previously, capture of Hasenfeld had to precede any seizure of the dam. The conformation of the earth is such at this point that the steep drop is navigable only by the road which runs through this town. The enemy had held Hasenfeld as though his life depended upon it—and perhaps it did. But the *Go-Devils* proved to be even more uncompromising . . . to the point of excellence. And whatever is said of the battle which culminated in victory at this dam, credit for executing the maneuver which made this capture certain belongs to the 60th Infantry.

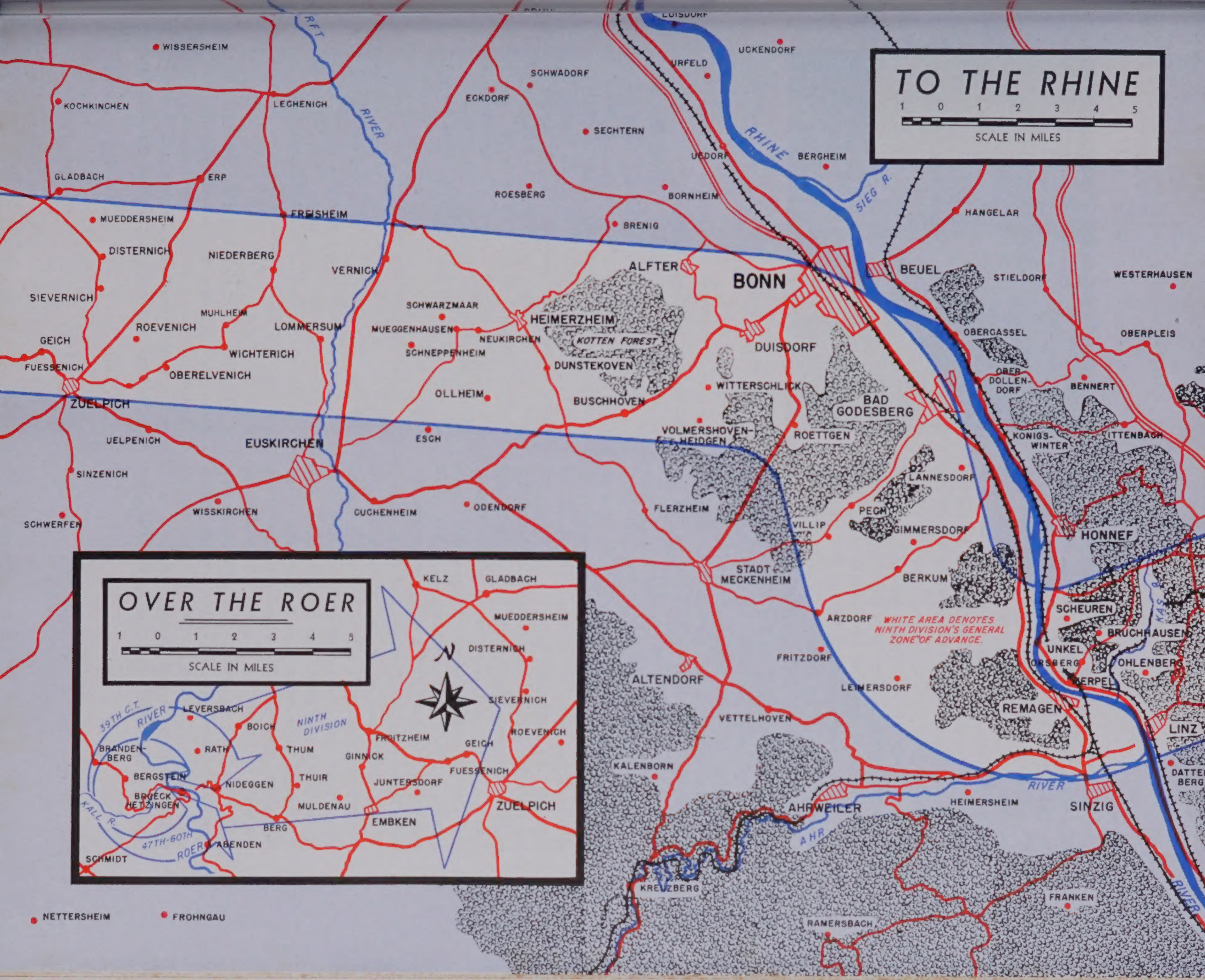
DISMOUNT LINE
ONLY ESSENTIAL
VEHICLES PASS
ROAD UNDER ENEMY
OBSERVATION & FIR

* * * *

EARLY morning arrived before many thought it should have that dreary Friday. It was February 9, 1945—and the 60th Infantry prepared to attack with all three of its battalions. The *Go-Devil* 2nd Battalion fought its way out of Schmidt at 5:30 A.M., followed by the 3rd and 1st in that order. Over each step the 2nd advanced, its doughs were the first Allied infantrymen to set foot upon that soil. Farther and farther pushed the battalion until it had moved forward about 800 yards. Almost immediately the rapid gain was slowed to a halt by stiff opposition from enemy tanks on the wooded high ground and small-arms, artillery and heavy mortar fire which began to hit the Americans. The infantry deployed across the rugged terrain and took up the fire fight. Untold numbers of mines had been strewn in the area by the Germans, and that factor presented a mental hazard if nothing else . . . yet the citizen-soldiers of America fought on.

Tank support was called for and with the arrival of a platoon of Company *C*, 746th Tank Battalion, a more bitter struggle ensued. The tankers, under Lt. McClain, did an amazing job of getting through a mine field, protecting themselves with smoke shells and driving off enemy tanks on the heights. The German defenders were beaten back gradually and their positions were reduced. By 4 P.M. all the high ground north of the river was taken and Company *G*, with tank and tank destroyer support, moved on the town of Hasenfeld.

Hasenfeld is another little hamlet which might have remained a typical farm village if the war had not come. At the moment it was the scene of a fierce engagement. A rough house-to-house fight had begun for possession of this key point, and as the night ended, the enemy launched a heavy counterstroke with three tanks backing his argument. Company *G* beat off this force and in a tenacious forward motion swept up to seize the high ground of Hasenfeld by 11 P.M. *Jerry* still held some houses, however, and these remained to be mopped up.



TO THE RHINE

OVER THE ROER

1 0 1 2 3 4 5
SCALE IN MILES
WISSERSHEIM
KOCHKINCHEN
LECHENICH
RIVER
ECKDORF
SCHWADORF
SECHTERN
URFELD
UCKENDORF
RHINE
USDORF
BERGHEIM
SIEG R.
GLADBACH
ERP
ROESBERG
BORNHEIM
HANGELAR
MUEDDERSHEIM
FREISHEIM
BRENIG
DISTERNICH
NIEDERBERG
VERNICH
ALFTER
BONN
BEUEL
STIELDORF
WESTERHAUSEN
SIEVERNICH
SCHWARZMAAR
MUHLHEIM
HEIMERZHEIM
ROEVENICH
LOMMERSUM
MUEGGENHAUSEN
NEUKIRCHEN
KOTTEN FOREST
DUISDORF
OBERCASSEL
OBERPLEIS
GEICH
WICHTERICH
SCHNEPPENHEIM
DUNSTEKOVEN
FUESSENICH
OBERELVENICH
OBER DOLLEN-DORF
BENNERT
ZUELPICH
OLLHEIM
WITTERSCHLICK
BAD GODESBERG
BUSCHHOVEN
UELPENICH
EUSKIRCHEN
ESCH
VOLMERSHOVEN-HEIDGEN
ROETTGEN
KONIGSWINTER
ITTENBACH
SINZENICH
LANNESDORF
FLERZHEIM
PECH
SCHWERFEN
WISSKIRCHEN
CUCHENHEIM
ODENDORF
VILLIP
GIMMERSDORF
HONNEF
STADT MECKENHEIM
BERKUM
ARZDORF
WHITE AREA DENOTES NINTH DIVISION'S GENERAL ZONE OF ADVANCE.
SCHEUREN
KAS. R.
BRUCHHAUSEN
UNKEL
ORSBERG
ERPEL
OHLENBERG
FRITZDORF
ALTENDORF
LEIMERSDORF
REMAGEN
VETTELHOVEN
LINZ
KALENBORN
RIVER
DATTENBERG
AHRWEILER
HEIMERSHEIM
SINZIG
AHR
KREUZBERG
FRANKEN
RAMERSBACH
RIVER
NETTERSHEIM
FROHNGAU
KELZ
GLADBACH
MUEDDERSHEIM
DISTERNICH
N
SIEVERNICH
LEVERSBACH
39TH C.T.
RIVER
BOICH
NINTH DIVISION
ROEVENICH
BRANDENBERG
RATH
THUM
FROITZHEIM
GEICH
GINNICK
FUESSENICH
BERGSTEIN
NIDEGGEN
THUIR
JUNTERSDORF
BRUECK
HETZINGEN
MULDENAU
ZUELPICH
KALL R.
EMBKEN
BERG
47TH-60TH
ROER
ABENDEN
SCHMIDT

On this day as well the 311th Infantry, less its 3rd Battalion, attacked from the vicinity of Schmidt in coordination with the 60th Infantry. Against heavy resistance the 311th battled forward and by midnight its infantrymen had reached the high ground in that zone which overlooked the dam. Meanwhile, the 309th Regiment made its way to positions preparatory to jumping off on the following day.

The situation that night was pleasing. The German salient between Harscheidt and Bergstein and the ridge to Heimbach had been cleared; Hasenfeld was almost completely within the grasp of the 60th Infantry. First Army's *Report of Operations* was equally joyful:

> *. . . The Schmidt area had been cleared; the lake shore above the dam was being mopped up; and the northern end of the second of two large and important dams which had long been our objectives in this area was in our hands.*

February 9th had been a cloudy day with alternate snow flurries and showers which rendered the ground sloppy. On the 10th the often unpredictable clouds showed signs of breaking and so did the situation. By 4:30 A.M. Company *G* of the 60th had cleared Hasenfeld of the enemy, after an all-night engagement which made use of tanks and T.D.'s. In its victory the company captured three tanks, several anti-tank guns, a large ammunition dump . . . only seven Germans were left to be *eliminated* before the area was secured completely. They were taken care of in short order.

With the ground above the reservoir and the strongpoint of Hasenfeld cleared, the attached 309th Infantry was able to move on Schwammenauel Dam against scattered opposition . . . a maneuver which never could have taken place without the actions of the 60th Infantry and Ninth Divarty (which coordinated excellently the fires of *30 Battalions* of artillery during this battle!) The 309th skirted the slopes and came down hill to the northern end of the objective. But they could not cross, for the enemy had blown a gap of some fifty feet in the roadway across the sluice and the crater was 30-40 feet deep in that mass of concrete. The dam was taken, however, and that was the important thing!

GENERAL HOWELL'S DIVARTY CONTROLLED 30 BATTALIONS

Across the sluice on the southern end of the dam was a German pillbox which continued to fire at the Americans. This fortification caused further damage to the shambles which was once a control house. Hasty examination showed that the enemy had blown the dam gates and now a three foot rise was flooding the banks of the Roer at Duren. This last gesture of the former occupants at Schwammenauel had an effect on the American planning during the next two weeks, since it multiplied greatly the Roer's rate of flow.

The 60th was to have made a night crossing over the Roer and roll on to the east. Subsequent orders cancelled this assault and the regiment stayed in place, patrolling the area and posting guards. Nearby were the ever-ready men of the 899th T.D.'s, who recently had exchanged their *M-10* destroyers for the new *M-36's*—America's answer to Germany's *King Tiger* tanks.

Nightfall of the 10th found the northern end of Dam No. 3 and all positions north and west of the Roer in the Ninth's sector in the hands of the Division. The 311th Infantry returned to its parent organization and at last the goal of the 12th Army

Group could be realized . . . the way was open to cross the Roer and head to the east.

Throughout February 11th, the Ninth guarded the dam against further demolitions and searched for crossing sites above and below the structure. There were checks on the rising water levels and a continuation of patrolling. Artillery and mortar fire from the far shore increased; flurries of snow had begun and the dampness of the region was apparent —for this was the winter war of the Roer.

By the 12th the Division paused to look at its catch of prisoners. Since *D-Day*, 31,324 prisoners had been captured by the Ninth in the European Theater, a fine record. Another achievement of the Ninth was described in a letter of commendation which was addressed to the Division commander and was signed by the V Corps commander, General Huebner:

"I take great pleasure in complimenting you and your most competent division for the smooth, efficient and professional manner in which you executed the difficult mission I assigned you on the morning of 8 February.

"You will recall that at eleven o'clock on this morning I made the decision to have you attack through the 78th Division and capture Schwammenauel Dam, and thereby accomplish the Corps mission. The importance of the accomplishment of this mission was such that it affected future action on the entire Western Front. In order to execute my decision it was necessary that you turn over a large part of your sector, move your division some 20 kilometers over most difficult roads, and launch an attack through another division which at the moment was engaged heavily with the enemy. I further required that this be done with all possible speed.

"Your attack was launched at 0530 hours, 9 February, eighteen hours and thirty minutes after receipt of orders. The displacement was admirably coordinated and successful. The division accomplished its mission. All of this is indicative of *know how*. The operation was a combination of smooth, efficient, and experienced staff work, as well as sound, decisive and rapid command. Your division performed in a manner of which your officers and men should be justly proud. The *old reliables* of your command have again proved there is no substitute for a battle-hardened and experienced combat division, that no Army has ever known better soldiers than we are now privileged to command, and that the 9th Division is of this distinguished company."

Unknowingly, perhaps, General Huebner had coined a nickname worthy of the Ninth . . . *The Old Reliables*. During its many campaigns the Division had been termed the *Veteran Ninth, Hitler's Nemesis* and the *Notorious Ninth*—after the coded *Notorious* which then stood for Division headquarters. These names all meant something, but the *Old Reliables* meant even more. Here was an expression which embodied everything for which the Ninth stood . . . and here was inkling of why flanking units felt relieved when somebody told them that the Ninth Infantry Division was alongside. *The Old Reliables* . . . yes, that was a mighty proper name for the Division.

* * * *

LINCOLN'S Birthday anniversary fell on Monday and that was the day upon which the Ninth was relieved of its responsibility in the 78th Division sector. The Ninth Division moved to its previously occupied area west of the Roer near Gemuend and those units which had been attached to the 2nd Division returned to Ninth control. In this sector things were fairly quiet and a great amount of rest and rehabilitation was undertaken by the Division. Artillery fell intermittently from the enemy lines, but for the most part the Germans themselves were content to stay on the other side of the Roer. Units of the 47th Infantry were interested in keeping the enemy there, and the *Raiders* posted themselves near the Urft Dam and maintained patrols and observation posts.

It was in the Wollseifen area at one of these O.P.'s that Staff Sergeant Alvin G. Pietrowski of the 47th's Company *D* almost earned himself a permanent job as flag-pole sitter. There was a 120-foot tower which seemed like a good place to establish an O.P. and Sergeant Pietrowski climbed it under direct enemy observation and fire. Once atop the summit of the structure he commenced to direct heavy weapons fire against the Germans. Twenty-five shells smashed at the tower in retaliation and Pietrowski looked like a goner. The sergeant, however, stayed aloft in his shaky perch and continued his task of observing and adjusting fire!

Sergeant Pietrowski had to leave his tower, nevertheless, for the Ninth received notification that it shortly was to move into another zone and become part of the newly-arrived III Corps. On the 17th the Ninth, less the 39th C.T. and the 34th Field Artillery (which again were attached to the 2nd Division), was instructed to proceed as soon as possible to the area then held by the 82nd Airborne Division near the Huertgen Forest.

With the departure of the Ninth from V Corps, General Huebner sent another letter of commendation to the Ninth's commander, this time thanking the men of the Ninth for their splendid work during the preceding four months. In closing, General Huebner wrote something highly descriptive of the Division and worthy of a second glance: ". . . By long experience in combat you have learned to beat the enemy at his own game. Recently you have defeated him on his own ground. The men of your command function with an ease and efficiency that mark them as masters in the art of warfare. It is with regret that I accept the loss of the 9th Infantry Division to this command."

With relief of the 82nd Airborne completed, preparations commenced for the long-awaited Roer crossing. Men of the Ninth—particularly the 15th Engineers—planned and trained for the crossing operation on the very banks of the river, itself. Originally, the Ninth wanted to assault over both the Urft and Schmidt dam regions after each of these reservoirs was taken, but higher headquarters had stopped any such attempts. Now it was going to be a tougher crossing, although one which was more assured of success upon reaching the far shore.

Since the Germans had demolished the penstock of the Schwammenauel Dam and destroyed the flood gates of the Urfttalsperre, there was a surge of water about 10-feet above normal seeping out at a rapid rate. The dams did not unleash the huge flood of water that had been expected, yet they did present a flow increase in the river. Consequently, the Roer was speeding along at rates of up to 20 miles per hour in some places. By careful checking, on the other hand, the 15th Engineers were able to locate areas where the current hit only 10-15 miles per hour, and here the constructionists prepared to get the Division over the Roer. Boats, rafts and swimming were of little avail against the strong current. Yet the engineers and infantrymen trained at the actual sites themselves for an assault crossing . . . since these were the only available stretches of river bank in the vicinity.

For several nights the engineers dragged cables across the river and weighted them down so that these lines would stay below the water until the moment of the assault. This gallant operation was carried on under the guns of the enemy who saw nothing, and the job produced many hair-raising experiences, two of which happened during February 22nd.

Corporal David M. Pinkney of the 15th Engineers saw one of the ferries which was operating with the cable sitting in the middle of the Roer—the cable had become entangled on a stump and the ferry and its occupants were in a precarious situation. Corporal Pinkney did not have to think twice; he jumped into the rapidly flowing river and by courageous endeavor was able to disengage the cable. This lone engineer was responsible for the saving of the lives of the men on board the ferry, as well as preventing the loss of the equipment aboard and the boat.

Private First Class Milton D. Wiener of the 47th Infantry's Company *E* volunteered for an attempted journey across at this time, along with three other men in a boat. Three times the attempted crossing failed, for on each occasion the boat was swamped in the swift current. During one of these trys Pfc. Wiener succeeded in saving the lives of his three companions by bringing the swamped boat back to the friendly shore. After all ventures with a boat had failed, he volunteered to swim across the river in the face of enemy artillery and mortar fire with the cable tied to his body! Because of the suicidal

LAYING CABLES ACROSS THE ROER

hazards involved, the ranking officer present refused to allow this man to undertake the mission—particularly in view of the rain of fire which had commenced falling. Wiener and Pinkney were examples of the type of men who laid the cables across the Roer by night and of many unsung outstanding soldiers in the Ninth.

* * * *

MEANWHILE, added strength was given the assault when the 39th C.T. and the 34th Field Artillery moved north, back with the Ninth's *Old Reliables* on February 21st. Now every available supporting weapon in the Division area was made ready for softening-up the Nazis . . . and perfection of strategy was completed by the 24th. Yes, all was ready and the enemy had not yet discovered the presence of sunken cables to his front. But at H—6, six hours before jump-off time, the plan for assaulting in the Brueck Hetzingen area was canceled by higher headquarters. The engineers had been all set, the infantry had been ready and the Division was about to cross this swiftly flowing stretch of the Roer. However, Corps and Army had alternate plans, schemes which were direct result of the successes of other divisions to the north.

Upstream, in the zone of the 1st Infantry Division, bridges had been constructed across the river after that division had crossed in the zone of the 8th Division. First Army planned to use the same technique for the Ninth Division, which meant that the Ninth was to send its 39th C.T. through the zone of the 1st Division, and this spearheading Ninth Division unit was to work down on the other side of the Roer, attack to the south after the 1st Division had reached its goal and make possible construction of bridges in the Brueck Hetzingen-Nideggen sector. The balance of the Ninth was to aid the attack, first with fire from the western shore and then with landings across the river, once the 39th had seized its objectives. It was a plan which portended the saving of Ninth Division lives, and wise military men prefer sweat to slaughter.

Actually, if the enemy had been so disposed, or able, he might have waged a long, delaying action—one of the Meuse River type. On the other hand, with certain reservations, he was unable to do so. In order to stem the current Russian offensive, Hitler had decided to place the bulk of his manpower in the east and wage a slowly-retreating battle toward the Rhine. If he could halt the Allies before this river until mid-March, he felt that he would have time to stop the Russians; then with the advantage of interior lines Hitler would be able to switch his armies to the Rhine and hold there indefinitely.

* * * *

One of the principal objectives of the Ninth across the Roer River was the town of Nideggen, which was taken on the afternoon of the first day of the attack.

—The Stars and Stripes

BRUECK HETZINGEN is one of those key road centers along the Roer. It rises from the banks of the river and nestles at the northeastern corner of the mountain-capped bend where the Kall River joins with the Roer. By February 25th the town was smashed from artillery lacings, particularly the buildings up the hill bounding the road which leads to Schmidt. Along the road which runs by the railroad station and curves its way to Bergstein and Brandenberg, however, damage was not quite as great.

Where the Bergstein and Schmidt roads converge, the Germans once had built a bridge across the Roer and to the east. Now it was blown and the swift waters were overflowing their banks. Beyond the bridge site and on the east bank rose a winding mountain road which clung to the rim of the mountains—or so it seemed—in its gradual climb upward. This mountain mass gave way at its crest to another type of terrain and to Nideggen. The Division G-2 had compiled an excellent description of what lay beyond:

PANZERFAUST . . . ONE-MAN BAZOOKA

. . . . *Once the heights of NIDEGGEN are reached from the west a great difference is at once apparent in the countryside. The rolling landscape of deep and tortuous valleys, of rapid streams flowing through dense forests of evergreen, of isolated villages and pastures gives way to an open and densely cultivated plain watered by slow flowing rivers, and lacking altogether topographical features of military importance.*

Monday, February 26th began for the Ninth that phase of the Allied offensive know as *Roer-to-Rhine*. Infantrymen of the 39th prepared for their part, while the remainder of the Ninth was massed in strength along the western banks to the south. Crossing the Roer under direct fire began early in the day for the *AAA-O* mottoed regiment. The 39th, with the 1st Battalion of the 60th Infantry attached, moved north, crossed bridges in the 1st Division sector and pushed south on Boich. American counter-battery missions whistled through the air as the regiment battered its way from the vicinity of Leversbach toward Thum and Nideggen.

As the 39th Infantry drove south from the line Hill 388-Rath-Boich, Ninth Division tanks and T.D.'s poured lead into crumbling Nideggen from the west side of the Roer. Enemy artillery, with its command of high ground, made assault difficult. Nevertheless, while the 39th continued to act as a *left hook* the 60th Infantry pushed across to assist the *AAA-O* after the latter had crushed the Nazis in Thum and Nideggen. This capture of high ground permitted a *Bailey* bridge to be constructed in the Division sector by the engineers. Gradually it became more difficult for the enemy observers to call accurate fire; although artillery fire continued to fall upon the attacking Ninth.

On the 28th the *Raiders* completed their crossing. Smoke screens concealed the 47th's spanning as the bridges came under direct fire. Jeeps and heavier equipment poured over the spans . . . and the doughs plugged eastward to the Rhine. Fateful February ended as the 39th, 47th and 60th attacked east and southeast to grab Berg and Abenden, clearing the remainder of the sector on the east bank and rolling approximately two miles to Thuir and the northern edge of Muldenau.

There could be no doubt of it, the capture of Nideggen had signaled another variety of fighting for the Ninth, both regarding terrain and the type of buildings. Before reaching the rising heights of this town, the Ninth had been engaged in the limited advance warfare so adequately described by the G-2. Once the Roer frontier was crossed, however, a series of plains confronted the Division . . . and this level land meant a more rapid approach to the Rhine. This was the much-sought Rhineland . . . the concealment and cover were less in evidence, and with the thaws came *King Mud* in all his glory. But . . . the Rhineland had been reached.

* * * *

EVERYTHING was swept into its path now by the rampaging Ninth. As though a *Kansas Twister* had risen out of the west—towns, hamlets, villages and important installations became engulfed in a ceaseless forward motion *East to the Rhine!* March was living up to its name derived from Mars, the ancient god of war. This was the month of a 185-mile advance, despite the desperate battle which was to come at Remagen; and this was the month of extended supply lines and changing weather. The medics issued 116,913 vitamin pills and the infantry overran so many towns that few doughboys could keep track of them.

On March 1st, Thuir was captured in a two-pronged attack by the 39th's 1st Battalion, which sent its Company *A* against the town from the west and its Company *C* up from the south. Thuir and the areas to the north and west of that town were cleared by 6:25 A.M. Somewhat earlier the 2nd Battalion had launched a 2 A.M. attack and after meeting heavy fire east of the wooded area between Thum and Froitzheim, remained halted temporarily to engage in a fire fight with snipers, artillery and mortars. By noon the battalion cautiously had worked its way forward and was in possession of Froitzheim.

Not to be outdone, the 3rd Battalion cleared Ginnick by 1:55 P.M. as the 39th Infantry struck against tanks, self-propelled guns and elements of the German Third Parachute Division, a unit which was to face the *AAA-O* all the way to the Rhine. In the afternoon, the 1st Battalion maneuvered north through the 1st Division sector and swung northeast to capture the towns of Mueddersheim, Disternich and Sievernich.

More towns fell to the Ninth in other zones, too. The *Go-Devil* 2nd Battalion added Muldenau to the list of captures and the 3rd Battalion captured the ridge west of Embken. Then, toward evening the 47th Infantry moved up to Froitzheim, preparatory to taking its place in the surge across the Rhineland.

Onward rolled the Ninth. For a time Combat *B* Command of the 9th Armored Division was attached to the Ninth Division and this added speed to the attack. The next five days witnessed the spectacle of town after town falling to the Division's crushing steamroller. On the 2nd, the 39th Infantry combined with CC*B* to overrun Friesheim and Mulheim. The 1st Battalion of the 47th aided by tankers as well, chopped on to grab and clear Roevenich, and simultaneously cut the main road which unfolds southwest to Zuelpich. Other *Raiders* smashed 2,000 yards to the east to reach the Neffel streamline on a front which stretched and joined with the *Go-Devils* through the towns of Embken, Juntersdorf, Fussenich and Geich, all of which had been won during the day by these two combat teams.

Niederberg fell to the 1st Battalion of the 39th on March 3rd, and soon afterward that unit stabbed on to clear Lommersum—a town along the Erft River and several miles due north of the city of Euskirchen. In the wake of armored units, the 1st Battalion battled against grazing machine-gun fire to the banks of the river and there it was halted by a determined enemy.

To the southwest, the 47th Infantry began an early-morning assault while it was still dark and seized the towns of Wichterich and Oberelvenich.

HISTORIC ZUELPICH

Further southwest, meanwhile, the 3rd Battalion of the 60th Infantry Regiment was engaged in another of its night attacks.

Zuelpich, ancient walled city was the object of the *Go-Devil* 1st and 3rd Battalion assaults this Saturday morning. Here the Frankish King Clovis had laid seige to the Allemans in 496. In recent times, visitors to Germany frequently had toured the city, which was famous for its St. Peter's Church (an edifice built during the 11th and the 13th centuries) and for its castle which dated back to the Middle Ages.

Company *K* led off the attack for the 3rd Battalion and Captain Clifford Barbanell directed his men against the city from the west. Slightly afterward, Captain C. M. Gatto brought up Company *L* toward one of Zuelpich's four gateways. The enemy garrison was surprised and modern siege-masters of the 60th made short work of the bastion. By 9 P.M. the city was cleared . . it did not look too much like a tourist's dream. The dull weather seemed to give the place a dismal atmosphere and the usually drab German countryside was damp with the morning air.

Sunday was not a day of rest, for the Division continued its tenacious sweep, scarcely giving retreating enemy units time to catch their breath. Against counterattacks, tanks, self-propelled guns, heavy automatic-weapons fire, artillery, barbed wire, mines and snipers the Ninth strode ever eastward. The approaches to the Erft River fell and the Division began assault of the river line. Soon the Erft lay behind—Bonn, key city of the sector boldly loomed ahead beyond the horizon and rising out of the Rhine.

Other seizures lay in wait before the Division was to reach that vicinity, however; for this was another of those veritable *rat races*. In the Ninth's drive from the Roer to the Rhine there were fewer casualties and more speed. Skirmishes developed, but they were from rear guard troops mostly; and such unpronounceables as Schneppenheim, Schwarzmaar, Gross Vernich, Mueggenhausen, Neukirchen, Duenstekoven, Buschoven, Ollheim (with its airstrip) and Heimerzheim along the route east fell to the rapidly engulfing sweep of the Ninth Infantry Division.

* * * *

General Hodge's First U.S. Army have broken into what were formerly the first defences of the key town of Bonn . . . . The advance to Bonn was made by the Ninth Infantry Division after a spurt which carried them through Alfter, three miles west of Bonn.

—London Daily Mail

Ninth Division doughboys were poised for the assault on Bonn, itself, toward which the defeated enemy garrison of Cologne was making a fighting retreat.

—Knoxville Journal

MARCH 7th was upon the calendar and ominous clouds were in the air—ominous for the *Third Reich* of Adolf Hitler! To begin with, by this time the 60th Infantry had accomplished capture of Witterschlick, Volmershoven-Heidgen and Roettgen Its 2nd Battalion was battering toward the modern suburb of Duisdorf and had reached to within 2,000 yards of that town before heavy anti-tank and small-arms fire halted its advance. The *Go-Devils* pushed on again and the defenses of Bonn were broken!

Southward, the 39th C.T. opened an attack upon world-famous Bad Godesberg, Rhineland resort center. The regiment cracked through the Kotten Forest, advanced six miles to the east to occupy the town of Pech and *AAA-O* patrols pushed out to Gimmersdorf and Berkum. By nightfall the Ninth was just three thousand yards from the Rhine and due west of Honnef.

Early morning of the 8th brought a two-battalion attack by the 39th upon Bad Godesberg, which was being defended by elements of the Third Parachute Division—the old opponents of the 39th Infantry Regiment. The 2nd and 3rd *Falcon* Battalions jumped off at 4:57 A.M. and 5:25 A.M., respectively, with the mission of converging upon the town. Extremely intense small-arms, artillery and *Nebelwerfer* fire met the attacking footsloggers.

The enemy waged a strong defense, but he was unable to halt the doughs, who began working toward the populated area. Soon all that held up the capture of the northern portion of the town was an 88mm *Flak* battery which was positioned in a well-constructed garrison along the river and near—of all things—a hot house. The Germans were part of the Bonn defensive ring and were guarding the Bonn-Bad Godesberg river road.

Facing the enemy was the 2nd Battalion of Lt. Colonel Frank L. Gunn. The colonel believed that the besieged garrison might surrender, and he asked for a volunteer officer to accompany a local *Kraut* civilian interpreter to the German commander—under a truce.

Lt. *Mike* Wolfson of Company *F*, his runner, a driver and the interpreter took off to force capitulation of the enemy battery. The instructions given Wolfson were that if the Germans did not surrender by 4:20 P.M., a terrific artillery concentration would be hurled at the enemy . . . followed with an infantry assault.

The quartette went to the enemy lines. Leaving the jeep and two GIs behind at the perimeter of the defenses, Wolfson and the civilian interpreter contacted the German captain in charge of the enemy

As the Ninth Division was making its historic drive across the Erft and to the Rhine, memories of more peaceful days spent in ancient Winchester, England, returned. Many doughs remembered often their pre-invasion sojourn in that bit of old England . . . and now came news that Major General Manton S. Eddy, the Ninth's former commander, had been given Winchester's highest honor—*Freedom of the City*. Part of the Lord Mayor's resolution read:

> ". . . Since the Ninth Division left us, we have rejoiced with them in their military triumphs, where they have been led in person on the field of battle by their brave General, sorrowed with them over their casualties, welcomed some of them back to us on leave, and, although we have made many friends in other American units, we still think of them with affection as *Our* Division."

troops and delivered the message. The Nazi officer was not disposed to surrender, ". . . we have a strongly fortified garrison," he boasted. "We are heavily armed and have four 88's aimed at all of your possible approach routes." The lieutenant argued that the situation was hopeless for the enemy. But the German retorted further that it "would be dishonorable for me to surrender."

Then the American officer spoke of all the innocent civilian lives that would be lost needlessly. To this the enemy commander replied that the message which the American should take to Colonel Gunn was that the Germans should be allowed time to "disengage and regroup . . . in a different sector."

Wolfson sent the man back, but instructed him to return with only one answer and that was, "No."

The messenger returned and time grew short. It was evident that if something were not done quickly the American artillery would fall on the 39th emissaries as well as the Germans—since the Americans then would be considered as lost. A lull of moments of infinity passed after the 2nd Battalion reply was delivered. Then the German captain took out his pistol. The veteran *AAA-O* officer did not know what to expect next, and he was relieved to see the captain hand over his pistol and form his men into two columns, minus their weapons.

Just at the moment they were departing, the American artillery opened fire and it was only by heroic effort that the enemy was kept from returning to their weapons and retaliating. When all seemed lost, elements of the 2nd Battalion approached and gave the lieutenant and his helpers a hand in leading off the prisoners. The Americans were members of Wolfson's own platoon who had gone to rescue him from what seemed certain death.

By 5:15 P.M. the northern half of the city was cleared and the battle for the remainder of the

BAD GODESBERG

GENERAL SCHIMPF WITH CAPTORS GUNN AND BOND

resort continued. After a stiff fight, Bad Godesberg was mopped up and the bag of prisoners was great—including Lt. General Richard Schimpf, the tall, long-coated commander of the Third Parachute Division.

Bad Godesberg was an excellent prize of war. It once had been a Roman resort and center of worship for Aesculapius, the god of health. The town was replete with many hotels and possessed a history which has few equals. Ludwig von Beethoven and Mozart gave concerts in Bad Godesberg; it was here that important political conferences took place. Ironically, infantrymen of the 2nd Battalion set up observation posts on the balcony of the luxurious Hotel Dreesen, where Hitler had proposed the occupation of Czechoslovakia to Chamberlain. Now, in a fitting reversal the 39th C.T. was proposing occupation of Germany!

In the meantime, the *Go-Devils* advanced against *Stalag* 6, a notorious German camp for prisoners, which the enemy was contesting stubbornly. By dusk the *stalag* was taken, but all internees had been removed for some time.

* * * *

BY THE morning of March 7, 1945, all the bridges across the Rhine River had been blown—except one . . . that was the Ludendorff Bridge below the small town of Remagen. Members of the 39th and 47th Infantry Regiments of the first World War knew this site well; it was here that they had encamped and many of the best photographs snapped of the period show members of the 47th Infantry standing guard on this span. Other than old-timers, however, few Americans on this morning knew anything of the obscure railroad bridge which stretched across the southern end of Remagen and burrowed into a tunnel on the eastern side of the Rhine.

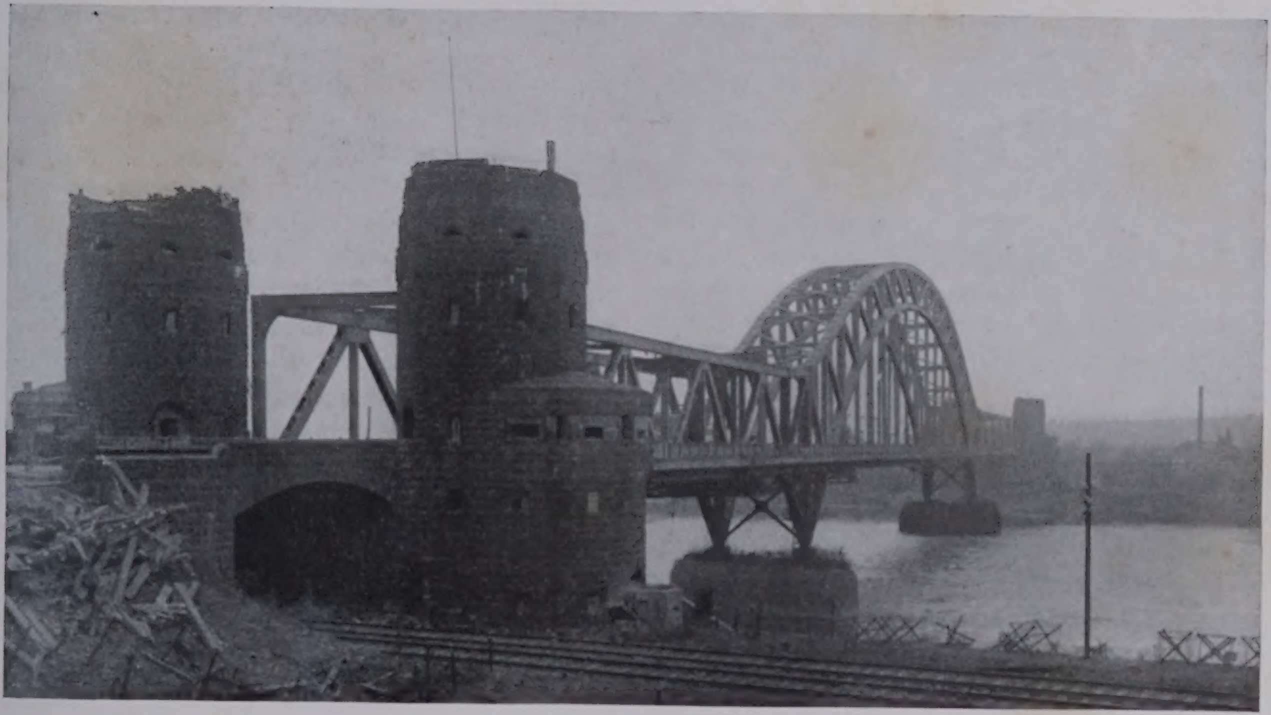
For several weeks the First Army had been plugging away hopefully at the directive that units should seize the opportunities which would enable them to open a bridgehead over the Rhine. It so happened that on the 7th, units of III Corps were spreading southward to make contact with elements of the Third U.S. Army. Major General John Millikin had been fighting his III Corps ostensibly toward the strongpoint city of Bonn . . . at least that is what the Fifth *Panzer* Army thought. Actually, the main thrust of the III Corps was aimed *across* the front of the Germans at Bonn and was directed more to the south, near Remagen and the juncture of the Rhine and Ahr rivers. Remagen was on the boundary between the German Seventh Army and the Fifth *Panzer* Army; the Fifth had left the Seventh to defend the region and the surprise pivoting of the III American Corps caught the Seventh off balance.

During the 6th, elements of the 9th Armored Division were able to break through the enemy lines completely and the armored spearheads carried on—irrespective of flanking protection—until they reached Remagen and the Rhine during the following day.

Remagen is situated at the base of Victoriaberg Mountain on the western bank of the river. It is a town of approximately 5,800 population and was founded in the dynasty of Tiberius, the Roman. Crumbling Roman walls and gate still stand, and at that time these ruins seemed in strange contrast with the railroad line which carried trains up from the south.

Ludendorff Bridge was built during World War I and named for the German general of the same name. The structure was just beyond the southern tip of Remagen—below the mouth of the Ahr River

THE WOUNDED SURRENDERED, TOO



LUDENDORFF BRIDGE

—and was a single-span, pedestrian and railway construction of some 400 yards in length. Railway tunnels were located throughout the high ground on the east bank and the rail line led into the village of Erpel. Beyond the tunnels lay a series of rising heights and these formed a natural barrier to invasion.

On March 7th the bridge had been wired for demolition by the enemy. He had taken his time in blowing the structure, however, since it was believed with certainty that the Americans were far distant. Then came a most startling announcement—one of those unbelievable good fortunes which befall an Army once or twice during the course of an entire war.

"The Rhine is crossed!"

During the late afternoon of March 7, 1945, this electrifying news spread like wildfire over the Western Front, causing jaws to drop and eyes to brighten. Taking advantage of the German error in timing, wide-awake members of the 9th Armored Division had seized—intact—the Ludendorff Bridge at Remagen! Small armored units began defending the eastern end of the span, advancing to tank defilade, behind *Flak Hill.*

So stunned was the German high command that for twenty-four hours it was unable to reinforce properly the scratch troops which were defending against the Americans. In contrast, things happened quickly on the American side of the Rhine. Upon hearing this news the Ninth Infantry Division immediately changed its direction of attack and under orders of III Corps rushed to the Remagen Bridgehead. The 47th C.T. was attached to the 9th Armored Division preparatory to moving south and across the Rhine . . . and Colonel Smythe's history-making aggregation lost no time in following up the miracle of the bridge.

The attachment came at 8 P.M. for the 47th (the *Raiders* had been chosen because they were nearest to the bridgehead). Since instructions had been issued to seize any available bridge over the Rhine, General Craig and his staff were waiting, as were many other divisions, to find out how the American Army would cross the Rhine and—more important to the men themselves—who would be chosen to lead the way over. When the moment came for action, therefore, the Ninth was prepared. General Craig was ordered over as bridgehead commander and from then on the watchword was *speed*.

* * * *

COLONEL GEORGE W. SMYTHE led his *Raiders* in a grueling nine-hour forced march over strange and rugged terrain in blackout conditions, and instantly upon arrival the 47th Infantry went into the attack. During the early hours of March 8th, 25-year old Lt. Colonel Lewis Maness boldly deployed his 2nd Battalion over the bridge. Crossing against heavy artillery and other supporting fires, the 47th became the first infantry regiment to battle across the Rhine—Teutonic barrier since the Napoleonic Wars.

As Colonel Smythe later explained, this movement takes added significance when it is considered that at the time the *Raiders* were ordered to Remagen, they already had reached their objective on the Rhine—which was some 25 miles to the north. The regiment moved to Remagen during a miserable, rainy, inky black night without benefit of any previous reconnaissance. Trucks were furnished the regiment as they became available, thus causing a piecemeal arrival of battalions. To complicate this picture further, the 2nd Battalion had to detruck eight miles from the bridge site and make its way over a narrow winding road clogged with armored vehicles. Thus, after having advanced that day to the Rhine, these footsloggers moved all night into

A NEW WATCH ON THE RHINE

Distinguished Unit Citation

The 47th Infantry Regiment with the following attached units:

84th Field Artillery Battalion;
Company B, 9th Medical Battalion;
Company B, 15th Engineer Battalion;
Company A, 746th Tank Battalion;
Company C, 899th Tank Destroyer Battalion;

These units distinguished themselves by extraordinary heroism and outstanding performance of duty in gallantly holding and extending the important Remagen bridgehead over the Rhine River in Germany from 8 to 19 March 1945. The *47th Infantry Regiment,* and attached units, were ordered on 7 March 1945 to cross the Ludendorf Bridge over the Rhine, which had been seized intact by elements of the 9th Armored Division. The 2d Battalion, *47th Infantry Regiment,* arrived at Remagen early on 8 March and immediately crossed the river. Committed to action at once, it passed through Orsberg and attacked toward Bruchhausen, where all resistance was overcome. The remainder of the regiment moved swiftly across the river during the day. The 1st Battalion seized Scheuren and the 3d Battalion took Ohlenberg, where some of the stiffest resistance in the bridgehead was developed by tanks, self-propelled guns, and well-organized enemy infantry. All battalions were immediately counterattacked, but these savage thrusts by the enemy were smashed after bitter fighting. Committed in the center of the bridgehead, the *47th Infantry Regiment* was the first complete infantry regiment to cross the Rhine. It was to maintain its foothold and attack to the east, northeast, and southeast to deepen the vital bridgehead and protect the extremely important Ludendorf crossing. The infuriated enemy, who by this time had recovered from the initial surprise of the crossing, reacted savagely to the thrust of (sic) Germany. On 9 March, the regiment continued the attack eastward against the violent resistance of a determined enemy, amply supported by artillery, tanks, and self-propelled guns. Each gain was subject to numerous counterattacks. Integrated enemy units including the 11th Panzer Division, were thrown at the bridgehead, and they concentrated much of their power in the center against the *47th Infantry Regiment.* Although constant enemy counterattacks made rest impossible, the regiment slowly but surely cut its way forward over the hilly, wooded terrain. Infantrymen destroyed tanks, captured guns, overran antiaircraft guns, and by 16 March, had forced the enemy out of Notscheid, after bloody house-to-house fighting. Allowing the Germans no time for rest, the regiment continued attacking and took Vettelschoss, building by building, and pressed courageously forward against ever increasing resistance to seize Hohnet. Finally, the autobahn was reached and the initial bridgehead line attained. As the keystone in the arch of the Remagen bridgehead, this gallant force had advanced 12,000 yards in 12 days against great odds. It had pitted its strength, its fortitude, and its bitterly earned combat experience against a desperate, aggressive, and, at times, a numerically superior enemy, and, by cool courage, driving force, and utter disregard for personal safety, had sustained and expanded the Remagen bridgehead on the east side of the Rhine River. The determination and indomitable spirit of the courageous officers and men of the *47th Infantry Regiment,* with attached units, exemplify the finest traditions of the military service.

what proved to be one of the most costly and hard fought battles of *Raider* history. Much credit is due the 47th Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon, which was ever dependable in guiding troops on such occasions.

The fighting engaged in by the 47th on March 8th was the beginning of a bloody encounter for the *Raiders.* Almost as soon as the regiment commenced pouring into the bridgehead, *Panzer* units from the north began approaching the hilly region rimming the American lines. At 4 A.M. the 2nd Battalion of the 47th had arrived at the bridge and began to cross immediately. Doughs trudged up the hill to Orsberg and then launched an attack across the gently sloping rise toward the small road center town of Bruchhausen. The 2nd overcame small-arms opposition and by afternoon this battalion was in control of the town.

With the capture of Bruchhausen accomplished, the 2nd's troubles of the bridgehead started. The enemy launched a counterattack consisting of approximately fifty infantrymen, three tanks and several half-tracks. Artillery supporting the 47th aided the footsloggers of the 2nd Battalion to repel this assault, but not without several losses for the Americans.

At 9:30 A.M. the 1st Battalion of Lt. Colonel James D. Allgood made its way across the bridge and reached Orsberg. From there the 1st pushed on to capture Scheuren, which is along the north shore and a few hundred yards up the road from the town of Unkel. At Scheuren, too, the enemy hurled one of his severe counterattacks, but again he received a shellacking.

By 7:30 P.M. the 3rd Battalion, commanded by Lt. Colonel William W. Tanner, was in the bridgehead and it struck east across the hills and the Kas streamline to reach Ohlenberg, which is approximately 2,000 yards due east of Erpel. After a twelve-hour house-to-house fight against a determined group of defenders, who were aided by self-propelled guns, tanks and automatic weapons, the 3rd grabbed Ohlenberg and got a moment's respite.

Panzers and other available *Elite* troops were reinforcing the enemy on the bridgehead defenses now, and the *Luftwaffe* opened its fight to destroy the span. Artillery concentrations increased from the hills beyond the American lines and they were to become even stronger with each passing day. As the remainder of the 47th Infantry streamed over the Ludendorff Bridge, it became evident that the Nazis were concentrating their growing power on the mountainous terrain in the center of the sector. With a fanaticism born of sheer desperation at having failed to destroy the span, the enemy counterattacked fiercely and refused to give up ground until he could hold it no longer. Time after time the *Wehrmacht* attempted to split the expanding bridgehead in two, drive to the bridge and destroy it. German success would have trapped the entire American force building up the breakthrough on the east bank, and the bulk of that force on March 8th was the 47th Infantry.

* * * *

ON CLOUDY, showery March 8, 1945, the Ninth Division prepared for its part in the bridgehead. To facilitate the movement of Division headquarters over the Rhine (so that it could assume command of the entire bridgehead) the 7th Armored Division was given temporary command of those Ninth Division units yet remaining in the former Ninth sector west of the river. That included the 39th and 60th Combat Teams, which were engaged at the moment in the Bonn-Bad Godesburg vicinity. Even as this attachment became effective, however, the 60th was preparing to follow the 47th C.T. and Division headquarters into the breakthrough area.

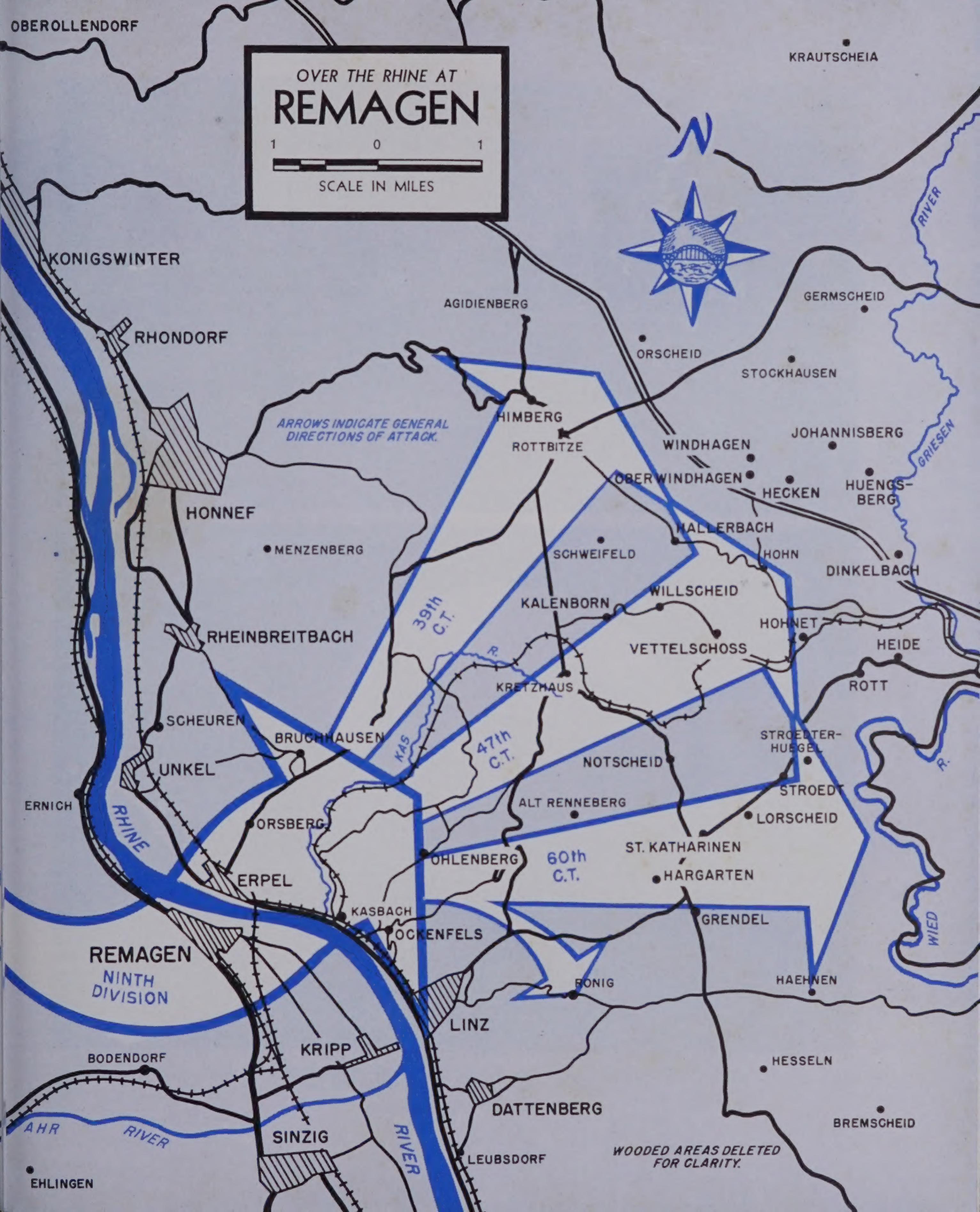
Mission of the Ninth was to expand the bridgehead and capture the mountainous terrain rising out of the east bank. III Corps strategy then called for dividing the expanded bridgehead into three infantry division sectors. The 78th was to be on the left, the Ninth in the center and the 99th Division on the right. Success of the entire maneuver depended upon seizing the high, commanding ground in the center of the line. Moreover, this terrain had to be captured before any expansion could take place.

The Divarty guns were kept on the west side of the river, since General Craig believed (correctly) that this action would eliminate transporting heavy ammunition over the already overloaded span; especially when many other items were needed more critically on the far shore. Artillery was to fire under a central fire control from the west bank.

Generally, combat teams are detached to fight and they leave their Division headquarters behind. In the case of the Remagen bridgehead, at least, almost the opposite happened. The Division staff was alerted at the same time as was the 47th C.T. and moved to the river at once to take charge of that sector to the east. General Craig had stripped the headquarters of non-essentials by the morning of the 8th, and everything needed was aboard every bit of available transportation that the Ninth could scrape up. At 5:15 P.M. all combat and supporting troops were detached temporarily and by nightfall the town of Remagen was the goal of this group.

As mentioned previously, battle-wise General Craig was chosen to command the entire bridgehead operation east of the Rhine. In effect, this placed the Ninth Division in charge of a corps, since the outfits building up the breakthrough soon were to become many.

When the Division units arrived at the site for crossing it was after the enemy had realized his fatal error, and the Americans found an obstacle course of death. General Birks, one of the first Ninth Division crossers recalls, "It was the longest 400 yards


OVER THE RHINE AT
REMAGEN
1 0 1
SCALE IN MILES
N
OBEROLLENDORF
KRAUTSCHEIA
KONIGSWINTER
RHONDORF
AGIDIENBERG
ORSCHEID
GERMSCHEID
STOCKHAUSEN
RIVER
GRIESEN
HIMBERG
ROTTBITZE
ARROWS INDICATE GENERAL DIRECTIONS OF ATTACK.
WINDHAGEN
JOHANNISBERG
OBERWINDHAGEN
HECKEN
HUENGSBERG
HONNEF
HALLERBACH
HOHN
DINKELBACH
MENZENBERG
SCHWEIFELD
KALENBORN
WILLSCHEID
39th C.T.
RHEINBREITBACH
HOHNET
HEIDE
VETTELSCHOSS
R.
KRETZHAUS
ROTT
SCHEUREN
BRUCHHAUSEN
KAS
47th C.T.
STROEDTERHUEGEL
NOTSCHEID
R.
UNKEL
STROEDT
ERNICH
ALT RENNEBERG
LORSCHEID
RHINE
ORSBERG
ST. KATHARINEN
OHLENBERG
60th C.T.
ERPEL
HARGARTEN
KASBACH
GRENDEL
OCKENFELS
WIED
REMAGEN
NINTH DIVISION
RONIG
HAEHNEN
LINZ
KRIPP
HESSELN
BODENDORF
DATTENBERG
BREMSCHEID
AHR RIVER
SINZIG
RIVER
LEUBSDORF
WOODED AREAS DELETED FOR CLARITY.
EHLINGEN

ABOVE: GIs HUG WALL PROTECTION IN REMAGEN
BELOW: SWEATING IT OUT ON FAR SHORE

I ever traveled because there was no protection and the *Krauts* were throwing everything at it including the kitchen sink."

The inferno of the crossing was made worse by the fact that the enemy still controlled the heights overlooking the Ludendorff Bridge; and with accurate map data and excellent observation posts, he was able to register at will upon or near the span with his heavy artillery. But the Division headquarters made its way across, and having crossed the Rhine it set up a command post near Erpel, assumed control of the bridgehead and began to regulate the entry of other units into the battle. Those American troops already engaged on the east bank were placed under the direct command of the bridgehead commander.

Elements of the 60th C.T. began to cross the bridgehead during the night of the 8th. Following its spanning the Rhine, the 1st Battalion, which was leading for the *Go-Devils,* without delay jumped off under a steady stream of enemy machine-gun fire. After proceeding some distance the battalion was forced to halt before an enemy strongpoint which was defended stubbornly in the vicinity of the road junction 1,000 yards northeast of the city of Linz. At this time the 60th C.T. had been sent to the right of the 47th and the strategy of the Ninth Division to break the enemy's hold on the center was developing.

Darkness of March 9th found the 311th C.T., the 1st Battalion of the 310th Infantry and Combat Command *B* of the 9th Armored Division under control of the Ninth Division. Because of their weariness and the roughness of the terrain (which called for infantry action mainly), the tankers of CC*B* were placed in bridgehead reserve. The remainder of the 9th Armored was on the west side of the river, fighting along the Ahr River front.

The front lines of the bridgehead now had reached an axis which stretched from Honnef on the left, southeast along the heights to the high ground just north of Bruchhausen, then to Hill 305 (which is about 1,000 yards northeast of Bruchhausen), and down along a gentle arc which rolled south beyond Ohlenberg and cut southwest following a streamline toward Linz.

Enemy resistance was stronger by the night of March 9th, and his greatest defensive and counterthrusting remained in the center of the bridgehead.

* * * *

Allied Supreme Headquarters announced the 9th Infantry Division of Lt. Gen. Courtney H. Hodges' 1st Army blasted out 500 to 1,500 yard gains in the bridgehead area Saturday—almost a mile . . . Front dispatches described the Ludendorf Bridge area as a raging inferno of German shell splinters and spent American shrapnel from scores of anti-aircraft batteries firing at German planes making suicidal but futile attempts to blast the bridge.

—Jack Fleischer (UP)

BY NOW the 60th had completed a daring dash across the battered Ludendorff Bridge on trucks, and ending that journey produced sighs of relief and prayers of thanksgiving. As more troops poured over, the furious and fearful Nazis smashed at the bridgehead with everything they had—infantry, armor, dive-bombing and strafing planes, *buzz-bombs,* artillery and mortars. They hit it so hard that for one period of six hours the valuable Remagen bridge, itself, was out of commission. Commanding views at alpine observation posts gave the enemy's artillery excellent fire data, and much of the time he could view directly down upon the actions of the infantry below. Day and night a rain of death descended upon the link in the sustained effort of the Germans to destroy it. Tunnels became improvised hasty shelters for those who had just completed the crossing, and men working upon the bridge constantly were taking their life in their hands. One such person, Technical Sergeant Henry F. Welborne, of the 47th Infantry, made eight trips over the river under fire in order to maintain a steady flow of ammunition to the *Raiders* during the first crucial days of the battle.

Traffic over the bridge was controlled by regulating stations of the Ninth Division G-4 (Supply and Transportation) Section under Lt. Colonel George E. Pickett. Since many of the units arriving on the east side of the Rhine did not know where they were to go, an assembly area was established on the far shore where these outfits could be assembled and directed immediately to their zone of action. The job of getting everyone over was most important and it was handled in a truly professional manner by Colonel Pickett and his men.

Working hand and glove with the G-4 were the Ninth Division's M.P.'s who had charge of all the traffic over the span. It was at Remagen that the infantry gathered a little more respect for the men with the clubs and armbands. To the everlasting glory of the Ninth Military Police Platoon, it must be said that the M.P.'s stood up valiantly under the hail of steel. As one M.P. fell wounded, another would take his place. Despite the terrific casualties inflicted upon this platoon, its men continued to direct a never ending flow of traffic. For six days and six nights, Provost Marshal Major Clair Thurston and his troops guided the might of First Army over the Ludendorff Bridge. Almost certain death faced these *battle-cops* but they stuck to their posts . . . a gallant inspiration to the doughs going into the inferno ahead. If the M.P.'s could take it, so could they!

Distinguished Unit Citation

The *Military Police Platoon, 9th Infantry Division*, is cited for extraordinary gallantry and outstanding performance of duty from 9 to 15 March 1945, during which upon it maintained traffic control on the Ludendorf Bridge at Remagen and in the Rhine bridgehead area, braving constant heavy artillery fire and air attacks to keep supply, evacuation, and troop movements running smoothly over this vital link. The sector in which the platoon operated was a target for 24 hours of each day for heavy artillery concentrations, air attacks, and on two occasions V-2 weapons. Under this murderous fire, the M.P.'s stood at their posts, unable to take cover, as casualties to themselves and to passing troops and vehicles mounted each day. When one of their own number fell, another M.P. stepped forward to take his place. The bridgehead over the Rhine was completely dependent upon the Ludendorf span; necessary troops and supplies had to strengthen the bridgehead in a steady stream, or all would be lost. It was the cooly competent direction by the *Military Police Platoon* which insured their crossing the Rhine despite the heavy, constant shelling. Vehicles were hit and reinforcements wounded; in every case the M.P.'s stood ready to clear the bridge, and did so quickly. When drivers of vehicles in convoy stopped to seek cover during the shelling, the M.P.'s went out to them, forced them back into vehicles, or took over themselves to keep the vital artery clear. The high casualties on the bridge and its approaches made it necessary for the *Military Police Platoon* to take over their care, which they did quickly and completely, setting up an aid station and an evacuating system. One of the first wire lines across the bridge was laid and maintained by the M.P.'s, despite the great difficulties caused by shell fire breaking the wires. The first prisoner of war cage on the east bank of the Rhine was set up by this platoon, and prisoners were evacuated speedily to the rear shore. With no concern for personal safety, the men of the *Military Police Platoon, 9th Infantry Division*, maintained control of the bridge with a magnificent display of courage and devotion to duty.

As was true of other Ninth Division units, Divarty controlled the combined fires of the entire bridgehead support from its fire direction center. At the height of this engagement, Brigadier General Reese M. Howell, Ninth Divarty commander, had 17 battalions of artillery under his control. The 15th Engineer Combat Battalion, the 709th Ordnance and the Ninth Medics coordinated similar incoming outfits during their initial entry into the bridgehead. Since the flow of traffic was mainly to the east over the span, medics evacuated the wounded by water in small boats . . . under fire.

Communications nets, equivalent to those which would be established generally by a corps signal battalion, were laid by the Ninth Signal Company—in addition to the tremendous strain of its Divisional bridgehead lines. Under intense enemy fire, signalmen kept communications open to the west bank of the Rhine.

Artillery liaison pilots, flying their unarmed and unarmored *Cubs and L-5's* through the *flak*-ridden skyways, performed mission after mission in order to give the artillery its *eyes*. *Luftwaffe* fighter and bomber formations attacked them, but they continued to direct counter-battery missions. One of these brave pilots was be-spectacled, jovial First Lieutenant Allen R. Sawyer, who upon being attacked by a flight of enemy fighters brought his small ship down to tree level and hovered above the ground at an altitude which was too low for the German planes. Then, upon their departure, Lt. Sawyer calmly soared to the heavens and continued his mission.

BRIDGEWORK

Doing its share—and more—the Ninth Infantry Division functioned with amazing efficiency. Supply dumps, recovery service and amphibious evacuation of wounded were carried on for the entire sector by the *Old Reliables*. This relieved greatly the load on the Ludendorff Bridge, which was carrying its capacity of desperately needed fighting men and supplies to the line.

* * * *

FRONTLINE elements needed every support they could get. The casualties were mounting and enemy reinforcements were pouring in to stop further advance. Whereas both the 47th and 60th Combat Teams suffered many losses at this time, the 47th was hit harder—for the *Raiders* had their casualties all at once and the regiment's losses took away most of its leadership. General Craig phrased it aptly: "The whole weight of the German army was against the Ninth Division and most of that was against the 47th."

That was the sad truth. In continuation of German staff policy, the very best troops went to the most vital places . . . and the Remagen bridge sector was as important a front as ever had been held by the enemy. Here all the armor, firepower and veteran soldiers were sent to contain the bridgehead and drive it back—if possible. The 47th Infantry, in the center of the bridgehead, was on the receiving end of a powerful hammering. Moreover, not only could the enemy view down upon them much of the time but the rough terrain was all uphill. During the month of March, over one-half of the fighting men of the regiment became some sort of casualty, and that attests the furor and degree of severe fighting which the infantrymen met.

By March 9th, nevertheless, the 47th was making fairly good progress toward the high ground. The *Raiders* began a 5 A.M. attack and the weary doughs pushed uphill, although they had partaken of little sleep or rest for 48 hours. The 3rd Battalion reached its objective and carried on. More determined resistance met the 1st and 2nd Battalions and they became engaged in stiff encounter. A steady series of tank-infantry counterattacks by the enemy forced these battalions to fall back to their original position. Artillery, armor and self-propelled guns gave the Germans a great advantage over the Americans and this heavy firepower was causing many casualties.

The attached units of the Ninth were experiencing tough going on this day, too, but their opposition was not as stubborn as the terrific engagement being fought in the center by the Ninth's combat teams. The 311th Infantry cleaned out the area south of Rheinbreitbach and seized that town, then pushed north up the road to reach and clear partly the town of Honnef by midnight. The 309th Infantry arrived on the east side of the Rhine during mid-afternoon on this day and reverted to control of the Ninth Division. It jumped off at 6:55 P.M. and was welcomed into the bridgehead by a showering of mortar and artillery shells. One prong of its two-pronged attack reached the regiment's objective in the vicinity of Hill 424 as night ended. The 52nd Armored Infantry Battalion of the 9th Armored Division's *CCB* filled a defensive gap between the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 47th Infantry and the 1st Battalion of the 310th Infantry. The remainder of the 9th Armored Division still had not exploited its breakthrough further and remained on the west of the Rhine.

There were occasional rain showers on March 10th, which competed with the German showers of shrapnel and plunging fire. Aided by his heavy self-propelled guns, the enemy increased the tempo of his tank-infantry counterattacks; and die-hard resistance, the like of which seldom had been equalled in the ETO, forced the Ninth to call repeatedly for artillery fire behind its own lines in order to repulse the German thrusts. Upon this last great defense line of the *Reich*, for the enemy, depended continuation of the war or quick defeat.

For the Americans battling against them it was a

NINTH DIVISION HEADQUARTERS AT ERPEL

EASTWARD PLUNGED THE DIVISION

nightmare of twenty-four-hour warfare. The searchlights which were termed *artificial moonlight* came into usage now; and during the nights when low clouds hung over the earth, objectives, routes of supply and towns were illuminated by this method. So long as the terrain was open, men were able to fight across the ground as though it were day. Only when the sky was clear, or when brush or woods hindered their rays did these beams fail in their duty. From the high ground the sights seen at nights in the draws below appeared inhuman, but this eerie type of warfare enabled the bridgehead to expand more quickly.

All along the front the German defensive stiffened to meet the new and more tenacious attack of the American night fighters, but hard-hitting doughs charging the hilly terrain pushed back the enemy. Higher and higher the Ninth assaulted. The strategy was simple; take the high ground and you capture the enemy O.P.'s! Gradually the German artillery lost point after point. Their fire became less and less effective, although it did not cease.

And so, eastward plunged the Division . . . when the center lost ground the Ninth pushed out its flanks. The high ground east of Linz was captured and the grip upon Honnef was tightened. Then the center strengthened and spearheaded forward once again.

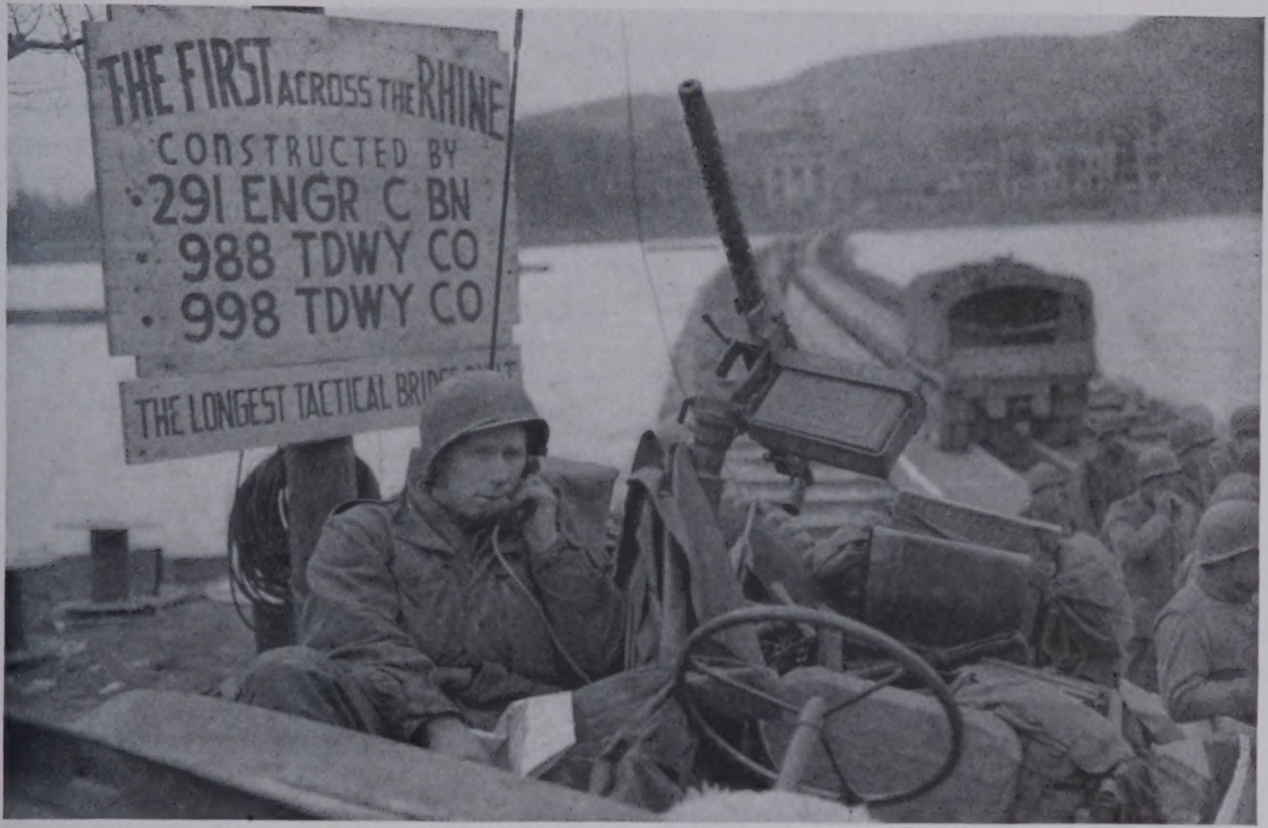
In the center on March 10th was the 47th C.T. and the *Raiders* were in for a full day of advance and repulsion of counterattacks. The 47th was hit by a German counterassault at 7 A.M. This blow was beaten off by the *Raiders,* despite the fact that the enemy had tanks in support of his infantry. Again and again the Germans ventured forth to force back the vital center, but the 47th footsloggers—tired and battered as they were—continued to halt all onslaughts. Hardened veterans of the 1st Battalion succeeded in jumping off for an attack at 7:10 P.M. and had advanced to heights beyond Ohlenberg by midnight. Here the battalion halted for a well-deserved rest in order that it would be able to carry forward the drive in the morning.

South of the 1st Battalion, the 60th C.T. attacked beyond Linz and captured the high ground approximately 2,000 yards to the east. The regiment had jumped off at 8 A.M. with its 3rd Battalion in the lead. Steady progress was made, and in spite of heavy opposition met near the village of Ronig on the rim of their objective, this height was taken by evening. As usual, the Germans continued their policy of holding out until all hope of retention was gone.

The attached 309th and 311th Infantry Regiments met success on March 10th, too, and the latter almost had completed the mopping up of Honnef. Another of the 78th Division's regiments, the 310th was over the Rhine now, and it became attached to the Ninth Division. Immediately thereafter, the combat team entered into a battle and was rewarded with capture of Dattenberg.

By 6:25 P.M. the 39th C.T. was back with the Division following its epic capture of Bad Godesberg. The *AAA-O* regiment was ready to attack after regrouping and General Craig had outlined for the unit a mission worthy of the 39th's ability. To begin with, the 39th was to become an attachment of the now operative 78th Infantry Division, which had committed on the left flank of the Ninth. The *Falcons* had as their task a bold *left hook* through

BRIEF RESPITE



TRAFFIC CONTROL

the sector of the 78th—one which ultimately would aid the Ninth Division when the *Old Reliables* had advanced some distance further.

* * * *

EXPANSION of the bridgehead continued on the 11th; and as strongpoints were cleared of the greatly reinforced enemy, the 78th and 99th Infantry Divisions were able to being moving to their positions on the flanks of the Ninth. The 78th had set up its C.P. at Erpel, and the 99th's combat teams were on their way across the span. With this entry of additional headquarters on the east bank, the 311th and 309th Combat Teams rejoined the 78th Division, and the newly arrived 395th Infantry (99th Division) was attached to the Ninth Division pending arrival of its own division in strength.

Its own combat teams committed fully, the Ninth now acted as a corps, coordinating movement of additional units into the bridgehead and directing the strategy which placed the 78th and 99th to the left and right of the Ninth. More supplies were rolling in, too, since three ferries were in operation across the 400-yard river at this time, running from Remagen to Erpel, Kripp to Linz and Ernich to Unkel.

To the north the 39th Infantry (as an 11 A.M. attachment of the 78th Division) attacked from the vicinity of Rheinbreitenbach to aid the strategy of the Ninth. For the next few days the regiment felt a powerhouse of self-propelled gun fire in its maneuver. Bad terrain and map inaccuracies threw off the 1st and 2nd Battalions, and rough fighting ensued as the *AAA-O* slowly pounded ahead through the woods.

Sunday, March 11, 1945, found all combat teams of the Ninth over the Rhine and in the thick of the battle to expand the bridgehead. On the right flank of the Ninth's zone the 60th Infantry was helping to relieve some of the pressure which previously had been centered against the now-decimated 47th Infantry. Earlier in the day the *Go-Devils* attacked with the purpose of deepening the bridgehead. Their 3rd Battalion jumped off toward Grendel, which is a small village situated in a draw just to the north of the Dattenberger Woods and approximately three miles northeast of Linz. At 3 A.M. the 1st Battalion had begun a night attack designed to clear out resistance at the factory which overlooks the road junction about one mile northeast up the road from Linz. The 1st was successful in its effort and Company *A* smashed on to Hargarten, soon to be the scene of a bitter fight. Meanwhile, the 3rd Battalion moved north to the high ground east of that town.

Raiders renewed their attack at 8:30 A.M., and battled ahead at a snail's pace against heavy small-arms, mortar, tank and artillery fire. Small advances and consolidations were accounted for, but these were of a minor nature, because of the determined opposition of the enemy in the center of the Division sector.

HOT DRINK BEFORE BATTLE

Engineers finished the pontoon bridge in the vicinity of Linz on March 11th, and just before midnight this span from Kripp to Linz became operative. Supplies began to flow over immediately and everyone breathed a bit easier, as this and other pontoon structures mushroomed out of the waters of the Rhine. The completion of this first engineer-constructed bridge had one effect upon the enemy—he fought harder.

During the two days which followed, the 47th and 60th Infantry Regiments continued their drives against much the same kind of resistance. There were many skirmishes and small unit actions which combined to make the *big picture* brighter. On the other hand, it took several days to capture some of the strongpoints held by the Nazis in the bridgehead.

Hargarten, a speck on even the best of maps, was one of those memorable spots and it fell to the 60th after a see-saw two-day battle. Hargarten sits at the eastern base of Hill 441, and both that hill and the town were prizes desired by each side.

As evening of the 11th blackened the battlefield, the *Go-Devils* were converging upon Hargarten. They continued the attack through the night, battling toward the town itself. Small-arms and bazooka fire met the advance on the 12th, but steady progress was made. Just 75 yards from the objective an earthquake of resistance erupted into the 60th from the enemy positions and lead poured forth in enormous quantities from German infantry and tanks. The attacking 3rd Battalion was forced to fall back to its jump-off positions and the key road junction before Hargarten was recaptured by the enemy at 7:30 P.M. Ten minutes later the 1st Battalion went into action, leap-frogging over the 3rd toward the objective and after a rough battle the stubborn foe was forced into retreat. The 1st fought into the town, itself, and by midnight its footsloggers were mopping up.

The first few hours of March 13th were spent by the 1st in continuation of the flushing out it had begun the night previous. By 4 A.M. the grimy and tired doughs looked about and found that they had cleared the town completely. This had been village fighting of the worst type—a tiresome, dirty, almost thankless task, promising only death or more fighting in the future as alternative rewards.

Later that morning the 2nd Battalion leap-frogged over the 3rd and attacked toward St. Katharinen and its *Three Time Hill.* Tanks and counterattacks met them and this willed resistance of the German defenders caused the assault to halt temporarily until dark. Then the 2nd Battalion continued its push and St. Katharinen was reported cleared by eight o'clock that evening. One hour and a half later, Company *I* retook the Grendel road junction which had been lost during the counterassaults.

In the meantime, the 47th Infantry engaged in two days of stiff fighting in its drive to the northeast. Machine guns, bazookas (*Panzerfaust*) and the usual small-arms fire in abundance were the retort of strong-willed German infantrymen, who were aided further by the excellent artillery and mortar support which had characterized the enemy's defensive in the bridgehead area. The terrain proved to be another obstacle, and the regiment was measuring less gains on the 12th. March 13th brought a continuation of the rough and tumble battle for the bridgehead's high ground, while the *Raiders* started their portion of the attack toward Notscheid and its commanding Hill 357. Throughout these attacks heavy automatic weapons and small-arms fire continued to slow down the advance, but did not halt it.

Men of the 47th bade farewell to their famed commander, Colonel George W. Smythe, on March 13th as he left for promotion and another command. His successor, Lt. Colonel (Colonel) Peter O. Ward directed the attack which was without respite for the enemy.

After stiff enemy resistance the savagely attacking infantrymen of the Ninth fanned ever eastward, out of the Remagen Bridgehead and toward the Wied River. Doughs seized high ground at every available opportunity, which made repulsion of counterattacks much easier in the outlying portions of the Division sector. Throughout March 14-15, the *Old Reliables* punched forward against the Division objectives of Lorscheid and Notscheid. Each hill and high point or ridge was an intermediate objective for a regiment or battalion or company, and it was by this strategy that the build-up was accomplished so speedily. El Guettar had taught the Ninth Division a lesson, one it never forgot—*he who holds the heights controls the situation.*

* * * *

WHEN asked what the town of Lorscheid meant to him, a fighting infantryman of the 60th said, ". . . a week under shell fire!" Both Lorscheid and Notscheid proved to be *tough nuts,* but they were cracked by the Division. The 60th and 47th coordinated in these attacks, with the *Raiders* assuming the western half of Notscheid as their objective

Distinguished Unit Citation

The *9th Signal Company* is cited for extraordinary heroism and outstanding performance of duty in action during the period 8 to 15 March 1945 in Germany. The *9th Signal Company* exhibited unusual gallantry in braving the perils and overcoming the difficulties presented by the mission of providing communications to and within the Remagen Bridgehead during the initial phase to operations east of the Rhine from 8 to 15 March 1945. Working under constant fire on the Ludendorf Bridge and in its vicinity, wire teams, radio teams, repair crews, and messengers of the *9th Signal Company* succeeded by heroic efforts in maintaining a serviceable network linking the bridgehead command post with the headquarters of eight infantry regiments on one side of the Rhine and the artillery components of the respective combat teams on the other. While radio teams and mounted messengers exposed themselves fearlessly to carry at first the burden of all communications traffic, wire teams undertook to extend lines across the river and thus establish telephone contact with corps headquarters and with the artillery. When an attempt to maintain wire on the Ludendorf Bridge had to be abandoned because artillery hits severed the lines faster than they could be repaired, wire was laid under water by pulling it across by hand from a small boat. This hazardous operation was repeated 28 times because of the frequency with which the light field wire broke under the current's pressure. Upon completion of a pontoon bridge, there were other lines maintained over this route, but only through the heroism of the repair crew which remained on the bridge under fire for 36 hours without rest. For 7 days the members of the *9th Signal Company,* operating in small separate teams in the most heavily bombed and shelled areas of the bridgehead and its approaches, preserved vital channels of communication and thus, through a notable display of unit gallantry rendered a service essential to the success of the first American effort east of the Rhine.

and the *Go-Devils* aiming at the eastern half of that strongpoint and at the town of Lorscheid. The fight in which these regiments engaged was a see-saw, bloody encounter, with companies becoming isolated and the enemy displaying a vicious counterattacking complex as well as a strength in armor.

By March 15th the efforts of the Ninth began to pay dividends. Early in the morning both regiments jumped off against their objectives and by two o'clock that afternoon the 1st Battalion of the 60th linked up with the 1st Battalion of the 47th in Notscheid. Four hours later the town was reported cleared. Sleepy-eyed doughs had fought through Notscheid against self-propelled gun fire, tanks, automatic-weapons fire and snipers, and repulsed strong counterattacks to gain their victory.

While the battle for Notscheid was at its height, First Lieutenant Terrence H. McCormick and Pfc. Barney C. Fisher of the 47th's Company *B* began a two-man sortie. They voluntarily rushed from behind protection and dashed into the devastating gun fire which was coming from the enemy positions, to inaugurate a house-to-house clean-up. The two of them commenced to assault the dwellings and buildings on either side of the road which led to Notscheid, and by hand-to-hand fighting and a daring exhibition of courage, the pair moved gingerly from house to house—flushing a majority of the town of the enemy, knocking out two machine guns and capturing thirty Germans!

With this capture came more victory; the high ground (Hill 357) east of the town was taken and occupied. This was the valued terrain of Notscheid, for it gave an excellent view to the east and made a marvelous site for observation posts.

The 60th's 2nd Battalion threw its weight against Lorscheid and was the recipient of several counterattacks in return. Company *F* lost contact with the battalion during one of these counterthrusts, but the drive was resumed and Company *G* made the assault which smashed the opposition remaining within Lorscheid. While the 2nd Battalion cleared the town, the 3rd sent its Company *L*, reinforced by tanks and tank destroyers to occupy the ridge which begins about 1,000 yards to the east of Lorscheid. These heights were taken and the leg-weary infantrymen dragged on.

Meanwhile, the 39th Infantry, which was attached to the 78th Division, captured a large ammunition dump and the Ninth's attached 310th Infantry and 52nd Armored Infantry Battalion battered through to the wooded area overlooking Kalenborn. This region was cleared against a stubborn enemy who used almost every weapon possessed by German ground force troops to stand his ground.

* * * *

UNITS of the VII Corps were entering the bridgehead now, and the V Corps already had begun to support the operation with artillery fire from the west bank of the Rhine. Clearly, then, the bridgehead was succeeding, for the might of the First Army was increasing to the east of the Rhine. With this additional strength came a realignment of divisional and corps boundaries on the right bank. A final bridgehead line was announced and all fighting elements of the First Army were ordered to halt at that line pending Army directives regarding further operations. Concurrently, the future offensive plans of the American forces in the Remagen area were given priority . . . and they were coordinated with the lengthy Allied front which now stretched and joined across the final defensive line of the Nazi nation.

With 4,000,000 men under his command, General Eisenhower had achieved his goal of a mobile, strong and well-trained striking force with which he could end the power of the *Wehrmacht* for all time. The capture of the Remagen Bridge and its subsequent build-up had not entered into the original planning of SHAEF; however, this fortunate development quickly was allowed for and the strategy of the Allies was altered to conform with the new lines.

The bridgehead, despite its great effect upon the victory which was to come, did not place the other Allied armies over the barrier that was the Rhine. Those armies were aided greatly by this foothold on the east bank, nonetheless, and in the days which followed, General Patton's Third Army ground on to the river in its zone and the Northern Group of Armies prepared to cross the river in force in the

BRIDGE COLLAPSE CASUALTY

sector south of Nijmegen. Since these operations required coordination with the Allied air forces and with adjacent units, the target date for the general offensive was to fall at a time when everyone would be ready. That appeared to be around March 24th or 25th; and crossing the Rhine by other armies was to begin the great and final defeat of the German armies and the formation of the Ruhr pocket. It was to inaugurate the Battle of Central Europe.

The Germans in one Western Front sector must have known this was a push that meant business. Because once again they were met by the "Varsity" —the veteran First and Ninth Infantry Divisions, side by side.

—The Stars and Stripes

During the week beginning March 16, 1945, the drive of the Ninth Division gained smashing impetus. Maneuvering to high ground was instrumental in the capture of Stroedt by the 60th Infantry. This was the day as well that the 310th Infantry reverted to its parent unit (the 78th Division), and the welcome period when the 39th Infantry Regiment rejoined the Ninth Division after its attachment to the 78th in order to aid the Ninth's capture of Kalenborn.

Company *B* of the 60th had been responsible for the taking of Stroedt, and now the remainder of the 1st Battalion turned to capture the high ground to the east. The resistance developed here was so stiff that Company *L* was dispatched to aid the embattled 2nd Battalion. Despite the fact that the Americans were able to get a firm foothold on this piece of ground, the enemy remained on the hilltop until the 18th.

With only a prior quiver as warning, the much-used Ludendorff Bridge collapsed into the Rhine on the afternoon of Saturday, March 17, 1945, St. Patrick's Day. Approximately 400 men were near or on the span when it crumpled into a mass of twisted steel and bodies. Although there were pontoon bridges built and in full operation at the time, this structure was missed greatly and evinced one choice *remark from an Irish-American, "This is a heck of a St. Patrick's Day!"*

Despite the fall of the bridge and the increased enemy armored and artillery resistance as he was compressed against the Wied River, the Ninth's line was moved forward steadily. In rapid succession Kalenborn, Willscheid, Hallerbach and Vettelschoss were overrun. More high ground was taken near Stroedter Huegel and by the evening of the 18th the Allied bridgehead had control of all the high ground overlooking its original build-up perimeter.

Then, under the cover of darkness, the 39th Infantry's Company *E* cut the Ruhr-Frankfurt *Autobahn* in the Hallerbach-Frehen (Himburg) area, east of Honnef. General Eisenhower in his report of the war had this to say of the action:

. . . Such efforts as the enemy did make were unable to check the further expansion of the bridgehead; and as its area grew, the north-south autobahn east of the river, so vital to the enemy, was severed.

* * * *

WITHSTANDING severe counterattacks, the Ninth steadily had driven back the enemy in the key central sector. Aggressively cleaning out all resistance, the Division had enabled other units to pass into the bridgehead, until the might of the American First Army was sufficient to push back the foe. Now the crest of the perimeter had been reached and the going became easier.

Driving continuously to the east, the Division spearheaded onward. Windhagen and its airfield fell to the victorious but ragged-looking veterans of the Ninth Division. Ober Windhagen, Rott, Heide, Hecken, Dinkelsbach, Johannisberg, Hungsberg and the high ground—always the high ground—fell prey to the seemingly unstoppable legions of the Ninth.

FALCONS CUT THE VITAL AUTOBAHN

The foe began to rely mainly upon his armor and self-propelled heavy weapons to halt the American military machine, but his efforts were beaten back with a consistency which put to shame even the victorious armies of Napoleon and Caesar. White phosphorous shells were used by ingenious GIs to knock out tanks; and the accurate American artillery pounded the enemy to shreds, especially after the American field pieces arrived on the eastern bank.

On March 20th a *Stars and Stripes* correspondent had dispatched of the Ninth: . . . *The Ninth Inf. Div. reported no unusual action near the center of the bridgehead.* This was the day when the Division command post, the organization which had run the bridgehead so efficiently during its darkest hours, left Erpel and set up at Kalenborn Station. That move signified the beginning of the end for the Remagen phase of the campaign.

By March 20th the Ninth had conquered, after desperate struggles, the entire central bridgehead area between the Rhine and Wied Rivers, securing a front from which the final blow at the heart of Germany was to be struck. In the words of German General Jodl, ". . . this action hastened Germany's defeat and shortened the war in Europe by six months"!

Wednesday, March 21st, found the *Old Reliables* patrolling along the Wied and preparing, simultaneously, for the giving of the word which would unleash them once again against the rapidly diminishing threat of Nazism and its progeny. Poised upon the River Wied, the Ninth well could feel proud of its part in the bridgehead. Now, as that blood-stained operation vanished into the tracks of the growing offensive east of the Rhine, the Division set its sights upon an ambitious goal—rapid and final victory. Conscience demanded nothing less . . . the weary old footsloggers and other frontline troops wanted little more!

Section XI photography credits: Pages 304, 321, 331, 332 by 39th Infantry; 306 is captured film; 312 by 15th Engineers; all others are Official U.S. Army Signal Corps Photos.

55

Section XII

The Death of A Nation

Central Europe

MOST causes are not things of beauty . . . especially in their lingering death. There is confusion and self-pity, contempt and excuse, exhortation and disillusionment. Military and political labors lost produce the most gruesome spectacles upon disintegration—the military even more so. Unnecessary death and maiming combine with destruction of homes, property and families; and the future assumes a bleak, austere aspect when the armed might of a once great power continues to hang on in the last punch-drunk moments of its existence. Mercy demands surrender, but the cause shouts, "Fight on!"

So it was with Hitler and his Nazi *Third Reich* on the morning of March 23, 1945. The cause was lost and only the least-informed, or most hopeful disciples of *Der Fuehrer* believed it otherwise. On March 23rd all German armies west of the Rhine were destroyed, with the exception of a portion of Army Group *H* facing the 21st Army Group. Group *H* was in a last-ditch stand to protect the Ruhr industrial regions.

It was during this same day, the 23rd, that to the south, General Eddy's XII Corps began an assault crossing of the Rhine near Oppenheim, thereby opening a bridgehead for the Third U.S. Army. Further south, General Patch's Seventh U.S. Army had cracked through the formidable barriers of the *Siegfried Line* in its zone and was pushing rapidly toward Germany's *National Redoubt* line.

In his unsuccessful efforts to contain the bridgehead over the Rhine at Remagen, the enemy had used elements of eight infantry, one parachute and three *Panzer* divisions against the American effort. Since the beginning of February his losses had averaged well over 5,000 prisoners and approximately 2,000 killed and wounded daily along the Western Front. These were losses which he could not replace . . . and they were only the beginning.

The immense stores of weapons and vehicles and other supplies captured by their opponents sapped further the German Army's decreasing strength. Aerial warfare had helped the Allies to work havoc with the *Wehrmacht's* rail systems, supply dumps and road-net transportation systems to the rear. Fighter-bombers and their larger brothers practically had isolated the Ruhr region—so vital to continuation of Germany's war effort—from the remainder of the *Fatherland* by disrupting and destroying the transportation systems which could carry its products to the battle and home fronts. In addition to all this, the morale of the people and their armed forces had sunken to the level of complete despair and fear for that morrow of reckoning which everyone felt must come inevitably.

Germany had counted heavily upon holding at the *West Wall,* and with that barrier gone, her legions had fallen back upon the natural obstacle of the Rhine River. Allied success in crossing that waterway had caught the enemy unprepared for the future. He had relied too much upon making a stand at those two lines; and now there were no series of defensive positions built to the rear capable of withstanding the onslaughts of a modern army.

Military experts, the Germans among them, knew that defeat was inevitable, and that prolonging the war meant more suffering for the Nazi nation. On

> . . . There have been many times during your campaigns in Africa, Sicily, Normandy, and Germany that I have said, "That's my old outfit." Every soldier knows how much feeling goes into those words.
>
> —General Jacob L. Devers

the other hand, the fanatics of Hitlerism augured that defeat meant their death or imprisonment. They feared that what they themselves had done to others in the infamous concentration camps might befall the perpetrators. Above all, the ruling clique clung to the moth-eaten theory that Hitler, once again, might pull them out of their trap and that a rebirth of German power would develop.

Germany should have surrendered on March 23rd, but Hitler ordered the fight continued unto the death. Sacrificed upon the altar of a pagan and violent ideal, the fearful and well-disciplined *Wehrmacht* carried out its orders.

Against this unyielding enemy, General Eisenhower and his staff planned the largest double envelopment of all times. Two army groups were to be engaged in execution of this operation, as well as the Allied Airborne Army and the massive striking power of the Allied air forces. Field Marshal Montgomery was to cross his 21st Army Group over the Rhine and envelop the Ruhr industrial area from the north. After expanding the Remagen Bridgehead eastward to a final bridgehead line, the 12th Army Group of General Bradley was to punch its main striking power at the important rail and marshalling center of Kassel. The pocket to the north was to be closed when the First and Ninth U.S. Armies joined along the rim of the envelopment. A secondary effort was planned with the Third Army driving against Frankfurt-on-Main, which would give that command a clear road over the plains to Kassel. To the south, General Devers' Sixth Army Group was to protect the flank of the Third Army.

It all boiled down to a very elementary usage of accepted military principles, which prescribe defeat in detail as an inexpensive and speedy method of destroying an opposing army. Never before, however, had this type of operation been carried out on so large a scale, or with such uncanny precision.

Evening of March 23rd found the 21st Army Group beginning what developed into the greatest river crossing in all history. The forces of this group were stretched along a 70-mile front, which was covered almost completely by a continuous smokescreen. Seventy miles of smokescreen is quite an achievement in itself, but it was dwarfed in the massive movement of the men themselves.

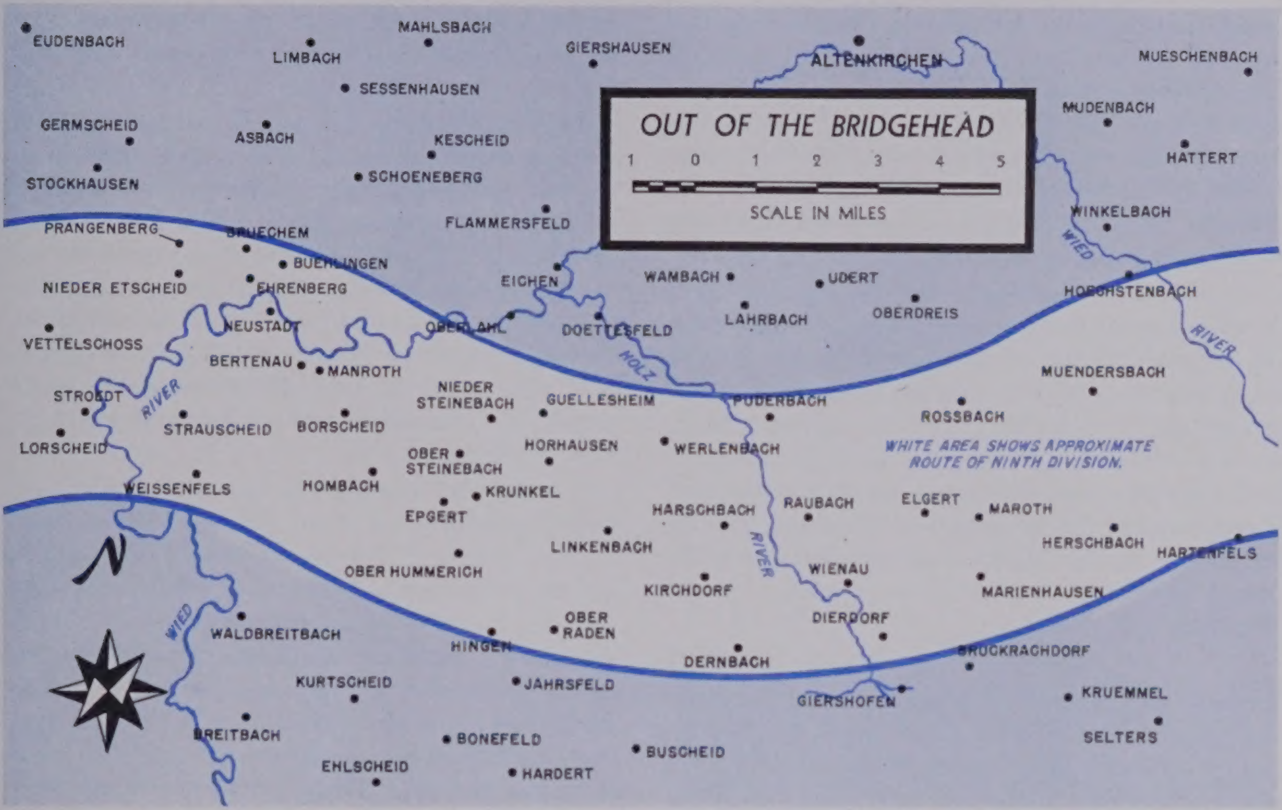
Southward, the First U.S. Army was following out its directives to push to the bridgehead line, Giessen-Siegen-Sieg River, and then to break out. By this movement the enemy realized that an attempted breakthrough was in the making, but he believed it would come directly to the northeast, across the Sieg River and behind the Ruhr areas. Therefore, the German high command placed the bulk of their forces in that area along the southern rim of the Ruhr country, in anticipation of such a thrust. Instead of following out such a plan, however, the First Army pushed to the southeast initially and then struck east, in a magnificent and daring maneuver, which exposed its lines of communications and supply laterally to the enemy.

Once again, however, that was the *big picture*, made possible by the fighting men actually facing the enemy and their supporting artillery and armor. As the late Ernie Pyle had intimated so often, to those frontline troops the only picture seen was a few hundred yards to the front, rear and sides . . . just as it was on March 25, 1945, in the sector of the Ninth Division.

* * * *

THRUSTING eastward in the center of the bridgehead, the Ninth Infantry Division had found itself at the western bank of Wied River on March 21st. There was a momentary hesitation, then against machine-gun and sniper fire the Division forced its way over the river in the 60th Infantry sector east of Stroedt and Lorscheid during the 22nd. As was true of other divisions along the front, the Ninth was attacking to reach the line from which the First Army was to launch its breakthrough out of the Remagen Bridgehead.

It was ten o'clock in the evening when the *Go-Devil* 2nd Battalion struck across the Wied to become the first Ninth Division unit over the river. Swiftly the 2nd plunged on to reach its objective on the heights of Hill 302—to the east and in the vicinity of the *Autobahn*. Companies *E* and *F* spearheaded the drive over the river that night, and while Company *F* continued to meet stubborn resistance


OUT OF THE BRIDGEHEAD
1 0 1 2 3 4 5
SCALE IN MILES
EUDENBACH
MAHLSBACH
LIMBACH
GIERSHAUSEN
ALTENKIRCHEN
MUESCHENBACH
SESSENHAUSEN
GERMSCHEID
ASBACH
KESCHEID
MUDENBACH
HATTERT
STOCKHAUSEN
SCHOENEBERG
FLAMMERSFELD
WINKELBACH
PRANGENBERG
BRUECHEM
BUEHLINGEN
NIEDER ETSCHEID
EHRENBERG
EICHEN
WAMBACH
UDERT
OBERDREIS
HOCHSTENBACH
LAHRBACH
VETTELSCHOSS
NEUSTADT
OBERLAHR
DOETTESFELD
WIED
RIVER
BERTENAU
MANROTH
HOLZ
MUENDERSBACH
STRODT
RIVER
NIEDER STEINEBACH
GUELLESHEIM
PUDERBACH
ROSSBACH
STRAUSCHEID
BORSCHEID
LORSCHEID
OBER STEINEBACH
HORHAUSEN
WERLENBACH
WHITE AREA SHOWS APPROXIMATE ROUTE OF NINTH DIVISION.
WEISSENFELS
HOMBACH
KRUNKEL
EPGERT
HARSCHBACH
RAUBACH
ELGERT
MAROTH
LINKENBACH
HERSCHBACH
HARTENFELS
N
OBER HUMMERICH
RIVER
KIRCHDORF
WIENAU
MARIENHAUSEN
WIED
WALDBREITBACH
OBER RADEN
HINGEN
DIERDORF
DERNBACH
BRUCKRACHDORF
KURTSCHEID
JAHRSFELD
GIERSHOFEN
KRUEMMEL
BREITBACH
BONEFELD
BUSCHEID
SELTERS
EHLSCHEID
HARDERT

to its advance, Company *E* punched forward over one mile encountering little trouble other than from the rugged terrain. Behind these two leading companies came Company *A*, mopping up and clearing a zone of advance for the balance of the regiment.

Fanning out and expanding its foothold over the Wied, the 60th continued into the east on March 23rd, capturing ten towns and villages against light, but well-balanced resistance. Company *E* had teamed with Company *F* to sweep clear the first four of these, and at 1 P.M. the 3rd Battalion leap-frogged through the sleepy 2nd to head further eastward and toward the jump-off line of the new offensive. By 3 P.M. the 1st Battalion had spanned the Wied and established a "bridgehead defense". Probing eyes looked forward now for that thin crust of German defense which blocked the breakthrough.

All three regiments of the Ninth carried the battle eastward on March 24th. The *Go-Devil* 3rd Battalion swept clean Bertenau and Manroth, and captured Borscheid and its commanding heights against such German infantrymen who had been left behind to constitute a rear guard. Concurrently, the 39th began an important evening drive with its 2nd and 3rd Battalions and by midnight, Company *F* had pushed far beyond the *Autobahn* to come under fire of machine guns from the heights of Prangenberg. Simultaneously, Company *E* advanced to the south and Company *I* had pushed north of Company *F*. Slightly southward, the *Raider* 2nd Battalion trod forth to surprise the Germans completely . . . the Ninth's evening assault had caught the enemy unprepared in many places ,and the line was reached for the big drive on March 25th.

. . . The rapid advance after the breakthrough on 25 March brought back many of the same old problems encountered on the Division's race across FRANCE.

—Ninth Division Report of Operations

The stage was set for a huge final drive and it came on March 25th. Major General James A. Van Fleet's III Corps, of which the Ninth was a part, was to attack to the east astride the *Autobahn* and against Limburg and the high ground north of Neunkirchen. This was the First Army's contribution to aid the Third Army to the south in its envelopment and seizure of the Frankfurt area. Paced at first by the Ninth and 99th Divisions, and soon by the 7th Armored Division, the III Corps drive struck out on schedule.

Initially the Ninth was to face masses of hills and ridges, many of them wooded, as well as deep draws in its jump-off, but beyond that lay a clear plain—or succession of plains—and the Army plan was to exploit this flat plateau land to the fullest with its armored divisions.

> *On the III Corps front, the 9th Division advanced 3,500 yards in the morning and 3,000 yards in the afternoon, so that its forward elements were disposed approximately two miles northeast of the autobahn.*
>
> —*First Army Report of Operations*

Riegel mines, blown bridges and small-arms fire met the advance that clear and warm Sunday. It was March 25th and the last offensive of the First Army in Europe was under way as the slowly retreating German Army attempted to institute delaying action along its thinly-held front. St. Lo and its breakthrough were being repeated with a finality which wrote *finis* to the once omnipotent *blitz*-masters of the continent. On the surface there was strong resistance by those enemy troops facing the Ninth, but in the rear there was only a hollow shell of emptiness—for the reserves were gone and there was not transportation to bring them up if they had existed.

Again this was a Sunday without rest for the *Old Reliables*. Grim-faced and cautious in tread from living like human panthers in pursuit of wild boar, the Ninth's doughs plodded onward, and a bag of 13 more towns and villages fell to their efforts on this day. The 60th's 1st Battalion thrust southeast through a ring of stiff opposition to seize Hombach, after which the 1st was passed through by the 2nd. The 2nd Battalion leap-frogged to continue the offensive on Epgert and Krunkel, some two miles down the eastern edge of the *Autobahn* from Hombach. Both of these towns were contested bitterly by the Germans; however, they were taken by 6 P.M.

From this vicinity Company *F* pivoted north up a draw which is surrounded by wooded hills to secure Ober Steinbach and Heiderhof—the latter of which grows out of the slopes of Hill 323. Following these captures, the 3rd Battalion passed through the 2nd in the direction of Horhausen, approximately 4,000 yards due east of the village of Hombach. By midnight the 3rd was entangled in a stiff fire fight with the enemy in the Niedersteinebach-Guellesheim area, some 1,200 yards to the north and northwest of Horhausen.

As the 60th cracked through the strong-willed enemy defensive to its front, the 47th Infantry worked ahead in its zone to capture all assigned objectives by nightfall against a foe as equally resolute as that which had been encountered by the *Go-Devils*. For the most part, the *Raiders* had been given the mission of seizing commanding terrain features enroute.

In the 39th sector the engagement was sanguinary. The 2nd Battalion continued its fight against the enemy, who kept machine-gun fire falling heavily from Prangenberg. It was still dark and the battalion pushed south to capture Nieder Etscheid, a village about 1,000 yards below Prangenberg. At this time the 2nd received a strong counterthrust from German tanks and infantry which developed into a stiff battle.

One officer stated that he never had seen so many dead lying about (at one time) during eight previous months of campaigning as he saw that night and morning. The night fight ended in *AAA-O* victory, and at 8:44 A.M. the 2nd was enroute once more to the southeast to capture and secure Ehrenberg, Bruechem and Buehlingen—a triangle of towns which are twenty minutes by foot from each other and which begin just to the north of Neustadt. Meanwhile, the 3rd Battalion seized six other populated regions, as the Germans attempted to halt their advance with a feeble display of small-arms, mortar, artillery and sporadic machine-gun fire.

* * * *

MARCH 25th was a day upon which the infantry had developed hostile defenses and opened holes through which the armor could plunge. Monday brought the breakthrough of which the enemy was fearful, and now there was no line upon which he could stop this smashing drive short of the Ruhr or the Harz Mountain regions in the west . . . the German crust was cracked. On March 26th, as the might of the First Army poured out to form the mold which was to become the Ruhr Pocket, the enemy went into full and confused retreat. Countless thousands of Nazis rolled back before, or capitulated to, the growing American onslaught. Fully cognizant of the Allied goal, which was to trap their retreating armies, the foe planned to hold at first in the Ruhr, and then break out of such a pocket before its formation was completed.

Little hope lay in creating another major line of defense in the Rhineland. Even enemy militarists, such as General Field-Marshal Kesselring, who had been brought from a successful series of defensive stands in Italy to replace the deposed Von Rundstedt, admitted the situation "almost catastrophic" after the success of the Remagen Bridgehead operation. With Kesserling's paper-mache front now cut in shreds, the future was hopeless. Hard fighting alone was all that the Germans could count upon to stop the steamroller from the west, but that was not enough.

Success piled upon success as the breakthrough expanded to the east during the 26th. Colonel Ward's 47th Infantry moved smoothly and quickly ahead while opposition melted into the distance. Objectives continued to fall, and by 4:30 P.M. the regiment had advanced through the woods to the vicinity of the town of Puderbach, where it assembled shortly afterward. Then the 39th passed through the 47th and the *AAA-O* helmets bobbed to the east—their wearers giving the enemy no respite, no time for thinking . . . only the steady tempo of American forces closing in on him.

Go-Devils continued their smashing sweep as well on this day. The 3rd Battalion rolled forward to overrun Horhausen and the area surrounding that town in another of those effective night attacks. Whereas the Germans had offered desperate opposition initially, this obstinacy dwindled to almost nothing by mid-afternoon and the town was in American hands by dawn. That afternoon the 2nd Battalion, which was marching out from Krunkel, headed for Raubach, and at 2 P.M. this important rail and road center was captured against scattered opposition.

Then once again the 3rd Battalion took up the fight, as it jumped off to seize crossing sites over the Holz River at the town of Marienhausen. At five-forty that evening, the 3rd was in a position to cross the Holz in the vicinity of Marienhausen, Maroth and Elgert—a trio of typically German river towns situated approximately 4,000 yards to the east of Raubach. Rapidly the *Go-Devils* secured their way over the Holz and the drive carried on.

YOUNG P.W.'s

Together with the other combat units of the Ninth, these foot soldiers prepared to follow in the wake of the 7th Armored Division, which had passed through the attacking infantry during the early morning and spearheaded approximately fifty miles into German territory against unorganized resistance.

The armor breakthrough theory of the 12th Army Group was working out well now, and presaged the beginning of another *rat race*—one which so disrupted the German high command, that by the time directives filtered down from Kesselring to hold a certain locality or line, that stretch of ground already was in the hands of the advancing American forces. Without control of his lower echelons, Kesselring was like a master switch devoid of connecting wires. Consequently, in the frontline units of the *Wehrmacht* each commander had to do what he thought best, irrespective of the wishes of his commander—which desires nobody knew in time, anyway!

To the old footsloggers of the infantry now fell the nasty task of cleaning out the usually pugnacious pockets of Germans by-passed by the tankers. Moreover, this hard, but necessary job had to be accomplished in addition to maintaining the speed of the advance behind the armor.

On March 27th the Ninth Division moved 27 miles forward, securing many crossings over the Dill River. Highlights of the day were the 47th's capture of the bridge at Sinn and the 60th's grabbing of the span at Katzenfurt, both structures to the north of Wetzlar—the home of the *Leica* camera works. Other elements of the 47th and 60th were in the process of mopping up the area stretching seven miles behind the Dill, while the 39th was eliminating pockets of resistance near Marienberg and the Nister River.

The high-pressured advance continued on March 28th, as the men of the *Octofoil* chalked up 25 more miles of gain. Names of towns fleeted by now, and even the infantry had taken to the roads. These highways were clogged with traffic and that factor, together with the human element that men can march, ride and fight only so far in one day slowed down any greater strides forward. In referring to the advance of the *Raiders*, the *47th Infantry After-Action Report* remarks jokingly: *Heavy friendly armored traffic on the roads offered the only resistance . . .!*

* * * *

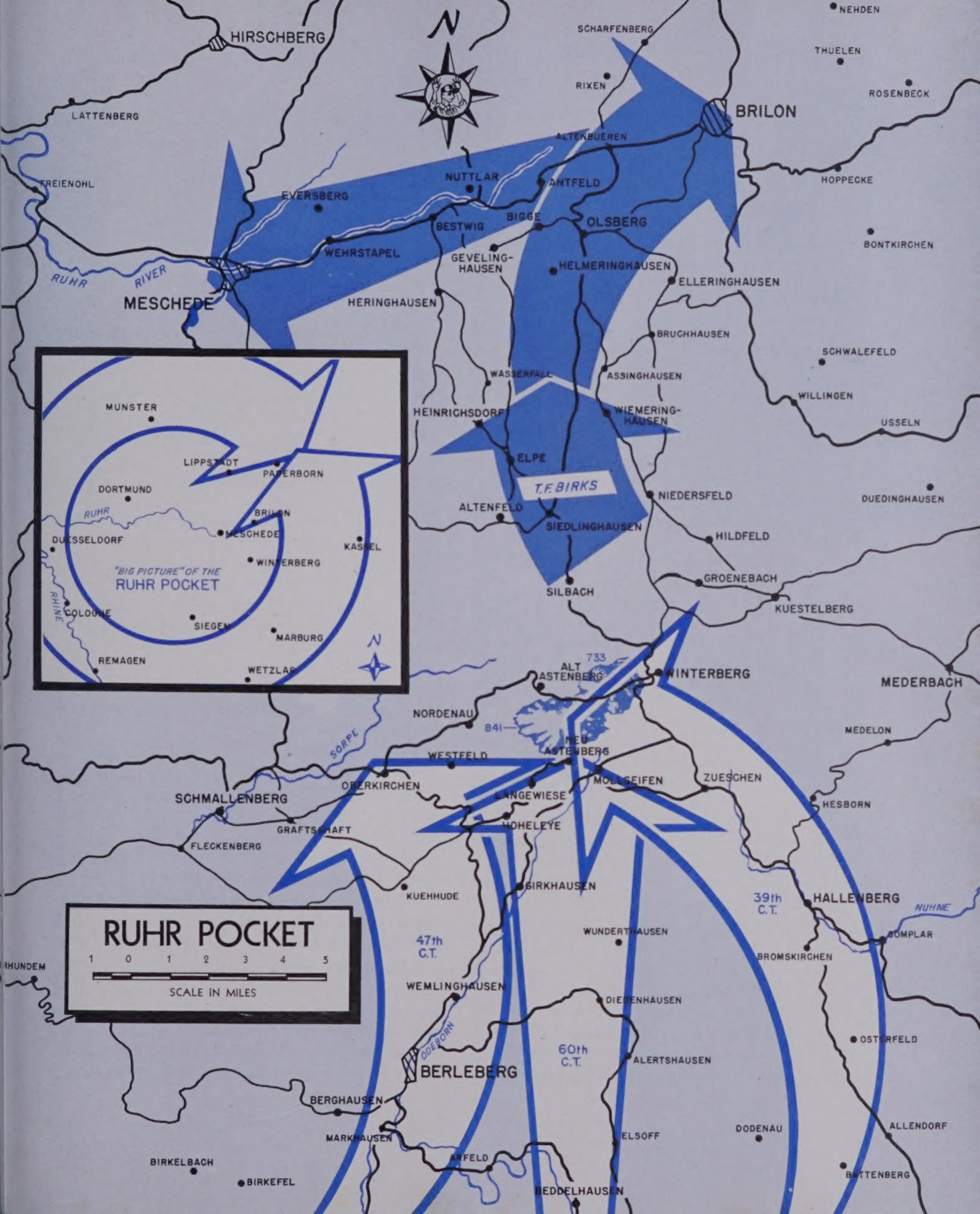
THE evening of March 28th found the Ninth Division as far forward as Hill 280, which is about three miles to the southeast of the ancient Lahn River city of Marburg; and units of the Ninth were in the vicinities of Lohra, Frankenbach, Koenigsberg and Hohensolms. Moreover, III Corps units just about had reached the line designated by 12th Army Group as the limit of advance before the First Army would press northward to join with the Ninth Army around the rapidly forming Ruhr Pocket.

Having rolled to the banks of the River Lahn, the Ninth remained in place, closing up to the shoreline and patrolling in defensive positions along that quiet, picturesque river, pending the directive which would give it a new mission.

Meanwhile, the Allies had advanced so rapidly that a change of plans was necessary. After March 28th, the 12th Army Group's drive was directed to bear more to the west and General Bradley informed First Army that it was to advance upon the Paderborn-Marburg region and make contact with elements of the 21st Army Group, particularly the Ninth U.S. Army. Such a juncture would seal off the enemy in the Ruhr and make possible the elimination of Germany's Army Group *B* and two corps of Army Group *H*.

While the First Army had been executing its part of the double envelopment, the Ninth U.S. Army had been equally busy. After bridgeheading the Rhine on March 24th, the Ninth Army thrust to Gladbeck; and now armored men of that army were racing toward the Lippe River, where they were destined to link up with elements of the First Army.

Coming up from the south, the VII Corps of the First Army was completing the encirclement, and on April 1st the 3rd Armored Division of that Corps smashed past Paderborn to join lines with men of the Ninth Army in the town of Lippstadt (an action which culminated in the death of Major General Maurice Rose, popular commander of the 3rd Ar-


RUHR POCKET
1 0 1 2 3 4 5
SCALE IN MILES
N
HIRSCHBERG
LATTENBERG
FREIENOHL
RUHR RIVER
MESCHEDE
EVERSBERG
WEHRSTAPEL
NUTTLAR
BESTWIG
BIGGE
ANTFELD
ALTENBUEREN
OLSBERG
SCHARFENBERG
RIXEN
BRILON
NEHDEN
THUELEN
ROSENBECK
HOPPECKE
BONTKIRCHEN
GEVELINGHAUSEN
HELMERINGHAUSEN
ELLERINGHAUSEN
HERINGHAUSEN
BRUCHHAUSEN
SCHWALEFELD
WASSERFALL
ASSINGHAUSEN
WILLINGEN
USSELN
HEINRICHSDORF
WIEMERINGHAUSEN
ELPE
T.F. BIRKS
NIEDERSFELD
DUEDINGHAUSEN
ALTENFELD
SIEDLINGHAUSEN
HILDFELD
GROENEBACH
SILBACH
KUESTELBERG
733
ALT ASTENBERG
WINTERBERG
MEDERBACH
NORDENAU
841
NEU ASTENBERG
MEDELON
SORPE
WESTFELD
OBERKIRCHEN
LANGEWIESE
MOLLSEIFEN
ZUESCHEN
SCHMALLENBERG
GRAFTSCHAFT
HOHELEYE
HESBORN
FLECKENBERG
KUEHHUDE
GIRKHAUSEN
39th C.T.
HALLENBERG
NUHNE
47th C.T.
WUNDERTHAUSEN
SOMPLAR
BROMSKIRCHEN
HUNDEM
WEMLINGHAUSEN
DIEDENHAUSEN
ODEBORN
OSTERFELD
BERLEBERG
60th C.T.
ALERTSHAUSEN
BERGHAUSEN
MARKHAUSEN
ELSOFF
DODENAU
ALLENDORF
ARFELD
BIRKELBACH
BIRKEFEL
BEDDELHAUSEN
BATTENBERG
MUNSTER
LIPPSTADT
PADERBORN
DORTMUND
RUHR
BRILON
MESCHEDE
KASSEL
DUESSELDORF
WINTERBERG
"BIG PICTURE" OF THE RUHR POCKET
RHINE
COLOGNE
SIEGEN
MARBURG
REMAGEN
WETZLAR
N

mored and old friend of the Ninth Division). With this closing, a solid but sometimes thinly-held ring had encompassed the command of Field Marshal Model, which was trapped within the Ruhr Pocket. Furthermore, so successful had the strategic bombing of the Allied air forces and their subsequent fighter-bomber strikes been, that by the time the ground forces approached the Ruhr, this area had become isolated in regard to transportation and communication.

Cutting off the huge mass of men within this area —which was to amount to one-third of the enemy's available soldiers—and eliminating the threat of continued production, which again might erupt if let alone, were major objectives which had to be accomplished before any successful drive to meet the Russians coming from the east could be realized. On the other hand, if the Germans were able to hold out in this pocket, General Eisenhower was prepared to keep the region surrounded and strike eastward just the same. So long as the enemy remained bottled up here, contact with the Russians was assurred in the immediate future.

* * * *

Lt. Gen. Courtney H. Hodges, commander of the First Army beat the Germans to the punch just 24 hours before they tried to smash out of their Ruhr pocket near Winterberg . . . The Ninth Inf. Div., commanded by Maj. Gen. Louis Craig, was rushed in to block the assault. When the enemy attacked, the doughs were waiting.

—The Stars and Stripes

WITH the battle shifting to the north, the Ninth Division assembled to the northwest of Staufenberg along the Lahn River. At midnight on March 30th, the Ninth bade farewell to the III Corps and once again was attached to VII Corps.

The area to which the Ninth was about to journey was one of those lovely wooded mountain realms which never should have been disturbed by war or destruction. Bubbling and fast-flowing streams paralleled the rock and forest. Often, when hiking up the winding mountain roads, a clearing suddenly opened to disclose a former summer resort, or the vacation home of some family. The beauty of the region was apparent, particularly to woodsmen and hikers. This land had been named the Sauerland by the natives, and it was now the arena for one of the most decisive defeats the *Fatherland* ever had known. It also was the current hangout for some of the *Wehrmacht's* most stubborn soldiers, men who would rather die than surrender.

Intelligence sources had discovered from prisoner interrogation that the Germans had planned a strong breakthrough of the yet forming pocket from the vicinity of Winterberg. With calmness and with dispatch, the Army commander, General Hodges, assigned the task of stopping them to the Ninth Infantry Division, following the Division's reattachment to VII Corps. The Ninth was ordered into the sector during the 31st, and as April began the *Old Reliables* were to launch a speedy thrust to seal off any German attempts to break out of the Ruhr Pocket in the vicinity of Winterberg.

This April 1st mission was an important one, for the meeting of the 3rd Armored with the Ninth Army units beyond Paderborn had not been effected yet, and even if it had, the results of a breakthrough by the Germans would have upset the Allied plans. With this in mind, General Craig quickly moved the regiments of the Ninth into the area from which the attack was to erupt and then sent his veteran infantrymen to the north, northwest and west in one of the smoothest curtailments of any attempted enemy counterassault of the war.

The town of Winterberg formerly had been one of the leading winter sports centers of Western Germany—mainly because of its hilly and picturesque surroundings. It was in this zone that a portion of the winter Olympics of 1936 were held; and apart from that boost, the town and its environs had been quite prosperous during the pre-war years. The self-same features which made the Winterberg locale so popular before Hitler decided to rule Europe made it a valuable military strongpoint now.

Winterberg crowned a high point of the area, and from here one could travel but a few hours and roll onto any number of fine, well-paved highways to the east—including the *Autobahns.* Surrounding hills viewed Dortmund, the Ruhr Valley, Siegen and at that time, *all* towns occupied by the Americans to

THE SETTING WAS IMMENSE

the enemy's front! The highest point in this area was the Astenberg, an 841-meter (2,772 feet) mountain—the highest in the region—with a 28-meter observation tower atop its summit. If the Ninth Division could seize the Astenberg (Kahler Astenberg), then the Germans would be deprived not only of routes of escape to the east, but of the dominating observation in that region as well. Several towns around the base of this mountain strongpoint had to be taken before the Astenberg could fall to the Ninth. Once this height was taken, however, it would remain a sore spot for the enemy.

It was April Fool's Day now, just after midnight. The day was Sunday and history was being made in as immense a setting as any Hollywood director could desire. Moreover, the Ninth Division was to prove *the hero* in General Hodges' script—for the *Old Reliables* were, within a few hours, to stop a massive enemy attempted escape.

* * * *

AT ONE-FIFTEEN that crisp morning the *AAA-O* infantrymen jumped off from the vicinity of Hallenberg with their 3rd Battalion on the left and the 1st on the right. Up the winding draw which leads to Zueschen and Winterberg plodded the infantry. Paralleling the roadway was the Nuhne streamline, and in places one could see the railroad track winding through the natural gorge. Little resistance was met by the advancing regiment until daylight; then small-arms fire, *Riegel* mines and roadblocks got in its way. The push slowed down somewhat, not only because of this hostile obstacle course of war, but for the reason that poor visibility was increasing hourly. At 9:45 P.M. the leading elements were ordered to halt because of this bad weather.

There was a short rest and then as the morning of April 2nd was born, the 1st and 3rd Battalions carried on their thrust in another 1:15 A.M. jump off. Night attacks seemed to catch the enemy unawares, and the 3rd Battalion punched on to capture Zueschen and the 1st took Winterberg against slight resistance just after first light. Zueschen proved the harder of the two to subdue and some fighting still was going on at 9:20 A.M. Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion seized the high ground approximately one mile due south of Winterberg.

The 60th Infantry had closed into the new area at six forty-five on the morning of the 1st. Five and a half hours later the 2nd Battalion attacked from Beddelhausen to Girkhausen, followed fifteen minutes afterward by a 1st Battalion stab to take the town of Neu Astenberg, dominating a 700-meter height. The leading 2nd Battalion was held up two miles to the southwest of Girkhausen because of poor roads. On the other hand, the 1st, traveling over a diverse route passed through a weak enemy at Mollseifen and was able to cut the east-west road in that vicinity.

With the coming of midnight, the *Go-Devils* readied themselves for another night maneuver and (less their 3rd Battalion, which was in Division reserve) carried on to their goals. The blackness of early morning covered the sylvan hills as the 2nd reached out to take Girkhausen and pushed through the woods beyond. Footsloggers of the 1st Battalion climbed the heights to Neu Astenberg. By dawn both of these objectives were in American hands.

During the night, however, the reconstituted *Panzer Lehr* Division and the 3rd *Panzer* Division had teamed up with the 176th German Infantry Division to wage a strong battle from the vicinity of Hill 767 (across the draw from Neu Astenberg) and from the surrounding heights. At 6:30 A.M. the Germans launched an overwhelming counterattack with tanks and infantry against the 1st Battalion in New Astenberg. So fierce was the enemy counterassault that the Americans were forced to withdraw from that town. The battalion dug in around Mollseifen, which is eastward and down the valley from Neu Astenberg. Here they held and dispatched Company *G* on a road cutting mission toward the town of Langewiese.

The company pushed beyond that town and toward the resort area of Hoheleye, where life was fast and furious in the engagement which followed. It was a heavy fire fight and the *S.S.* were fighting with the ferocity of mad men. Moreover, it was the time of a freak snowstorm and of a battle done in *Prohibition*-days gangster style. As the elements of the company approached this town, the *S.S.* tried to escape in fast cars. They did not know which exits had been blocked and roared up and down the road, firing as they went. The GIs headed into a resort hotel and began battling for the lobby, while the Nazis shot it out from behind sofas and chairs, from behind doors and windows.

Soon the fierce and bloody battle was over . . . and the prisoners were lined up. One *S.S.* man with half of his face shot off was in the lineup; in front a haughty *S.S.* officer was complaining about the treatment they were receiving, and herding the bunch was short, bushy-browed Pfc. Bartlett E. Doe, one of America's finest artists, who currently had stomach trouble from eating too many *C* Rations and did not care particularly for the company he was guarding. His prize remark in reference to the entire battle was, "We shot up the *S.S.* boys in country resort hotels." And that meant that the road had been cut by Company *G!*

With the situation still not cleared in Neu Astenberg, the 3rd Battalion of the 39th (which was then in Zueschen and the high ground southwest of Winterberg) was ordered to retake that town. Quickly, the 39th readjusted its lines and the 3rd left the quaint town of Zueschen, hiked over the high ground, passed through elements of the 60th and knocked the enemy out of Neu Astenberg. Just like that!

Along the western boundary of the huge Division front, meanwhile, the *Raiders* were on their way to an action which was to win for the 2nd Battalion the last *Distinguished Unit Citation* to be earned by any Ninth Division unit during World War II.

* * * *

AT TEN-FIFTEEN on the morning of April 1st, the 47th launched an attack which had the towns of Berleberg and Berghausen as its objectives. Berleberg, a fairly large town sitting astride the Odeborn streamline was the goal of the 1st Battalion, while Berghausen was the mission of the 3rd Battalion. It was not until evening that the enemy began to evidence a stubborn desire to halt the advancing *Raiders*. At that time the 3rd Battalion met a great deal of opposition, and in its zone Company *B* was

ACTION AT OBERKIRCHEN

pinned down temporarily by overwhelming small-arms, artillery and S.P. gun fire.

The 3rd managed to reach the outskirts of Berghausen that night, where it stopped. In its efforts the 1st was more successful, and by midnight that battalion's leading infantry troops were battling for the town of Berleberg in a steady effort to flush out that area. April 1st gave way to the 2nd and the battle continued.

As mentioned previously, the 2nd was a Monday . . . and it turned out to be a *blue* one for the enemy facing the 47th. The 1st and 3rd Battalions jumped off for their objectives at 6:30 A.M., and less than four hours later Company *A* was entering Berleberg. Early that afternoon both Berleberg and Berghausen felt the footsteps of new masters—two more towns had fallen to the 47th. By evening the 2nd Battalion had joined the fight, and its riflemen began to find that a hardened and veteran enemy was contesting increasingly their drive forward. The 2nd was headed for the important town of Oberkirchen—a key river and road-junction town 12,000 yards to the north of Berleberg.

While other members of the 47th Infantry were clearing the high ground between Berghausen and Berleberg on April 3rd, the 2nd Battalion continued its historic march against Oberkirchen. The jump-off time was eight o'clock that morning, and the ground was damp with the showers of the preceding day. By afternoon Oberkirchen was taken and cleared . . . then the fight *really* began.

Capture of Oberkirchen appeared to have ignited a keg of Nazi dynamite, for during the hours which followed, extremely fierce fighting was encountered by the 2nd Battalion in that town. Like cornered rats, the Nazis tried to break out of their narrowing encirclement at this point, and Oberkirchen became a hotbed of activity as a mounting pressure came from the enemy lines.

But the 2nd Battalion held firm against the 9 P.M. counterattack, which was composed of German infantry supported by approximately five tanks. The foe was repulsed and his attempted breakout had failed for that day. Then on the 4th, the Germans began a series of strong counterthrusts against the battalion. Their most determined effort began at 6:55 A.M., when infantry and armor began a nine-hour sustained try to recapture the vital town. At first *Jerry* sent one lone tank into the town, and this was followed by more in short order. However, the enemy reckoned without the steadfast determination of the American defenders. In one of the most gallant exhibitions of tenacity on record, the *Raider* 2nd Battalion continued to hold fast, and all enemy thrusts were thrown back violently. By four o'clock on the afternoon of April 4th, the weary doughs and their supporting tank and tank-destroying crews had shown the German die-hards the uselessness of counterattacking. The only accomplishment of such actions by the enemy was destruction of a great deal of his armor and manpower.

Perhaps, too much credit has been given battalions by number in battle, with little regard paid to the individual soldiers and their squad actions. Unsung acts of gallantry are so numerous, on the other hand, that it is almost impossible to describe any action without slighting some soldier whose role in the victorious skirmish is unknown, unseen or forgotten.

Distinguished Unit Citation

The *2nd Battalion (Reinforced), 47th Infantry Regiment*, is cited for conspicuous battle action and outstanding performance of duty during the period 2 to 5 April 1945. The town of Oberkirchen, Germany, one of the key points in the enemy escape route and so situated that it controlled the road net vital to the enemy communications and supply, was assigned as an objective to the *2d Battalion (Reinforced)* and at 0800 hours, 2 April 1945, the battalion jumped off to seize this objective. Advancing over 7 miles of difficult, hilly, and exposed terrain and under intense small-arms and mortar fire along the entire route, the battalion, Company G leading, passed through Welminghausen and ran into heavily fortified positions, and, after an extremely bitter and aggressive hand-to-hand fight, cleared the woods with the following results: 30 enemy dead, 8 enemy wounded, and 52 captured. The battalion continued onward with supporting machine-gun and tank fire from the 2d Platoon, 746th Tank Battalion, though still under intense enemy small-arms and now artillery fire, and entered Vewald, where Company G, under direct fire from three Mark IV tanks and artillery, drove the enemy from the town and caused the tanks to withdraw, after a hand-to-hand, house-to-house struggle, which caused the enemy the following casualties: 10 enemy dead, and 40 captured. The advance, which now came under heavy artillery and self-propelled-gun fire, continued to the objective, where, after an intense artillery barrage, Companies E and F advanced over exposed terrain, which was under deadly small-arms, mortar, artillery, self-propelled, and point-blank fire from five enemy tanks, entered the town at 1500 hours, and, by 1800 hours, completely cleared the town of enemy, after a bloody hand-to-hand encounter. An enemy counterattack, composed of 200 infantrymen and 6 tanks, was launched at 1900 hours, which overran part of Company E and penetrated two-thirds through town, isolating 2 platoons of Company E. At this point, the battalion called for, and received, all available artillery fire from the 84th Field Artillery Battalion and Cannon Company, 47th Infantry Regiment, on its own positions, which inflicted many casualties upon the enemy. Company F then launched a vigorous attack, which succeeded in making contact with Company E. The lines became very fluid, with enemy remaining in scattered groups in the town. Preparations were made for expected counterattacks, including the laying of mines by the 1st Platoon, Company B, 15th Engineer Battalion. At 0630 hours the following morning, the enemy launched another attack, consisting of 200 infantrymen and 5 tanks, in a last desperate effort to drive the battalion from the town. Three platoons were overrun in this attack and enemy tanks penetrated to the center of town. Bazooka teams destroyed 3 of the enemy tanks from a range of 20 yards and tank-destroyer fire from the 2d Platoon, 899th Tank Destroyer Battalion, accounted for 1 more. Fierce and vicious hand-to-hand fighting and the extreme aggressiveness of the men of the battalion caused the enemy to withdraw in wild disorder, leaving 78 captured, many wounded, and the town safely in hand. During the period 2 to 5 April 1945, the *2d Battalion (Reinforced) 47th Infantry Regiment* assaulted and captured 3 towns, took 270 prisoners and hundreds of small arms and automatic weapons, destroyed 4 enemy tanks, and completely annihilated 1 battalion of infantry and elements of 2 other battalions. During this period, the battalion operated without flank protection on either flank, suffered numerous casualties, which were evacuated by Company B, 9th Medical Battalion, crossed more than 13 miles of heavily defended and difficult terrain, and engaged and annihilated a fanatical stubborn enemy by a magnificent display of gallantry, courage, and devotion to duty.

There were a large number of brave acts performed daily by men who never received recognition for their bravery. Similarly, Oberkirchen was held not by one or two winners of medals, but by a group of veteran soldiers who refused to leave their ground. Just the same, however, there are acts of outstanding individual soldiery which merit telling . . . if only to be held up as examples of the actions of many others.

Private Lloyd L. Holder of Company *E* was acting as squad leader on April 3, 1945. Holder's was one of several self-sacrifices that day, and his actions indicate the type of men who were fighting on the side of the Americans. As the Germans launched their infantry-tank counterattack, the spearheads of this thrust struck at the infantrymen up front. The enemy swept to within twenty yards of Private Holder's squad and the squad leader ordered his men to withdraw and take up better positions to the rear. While this movement was being carried out, Private Holder held his ground, battling alone against the advancing enemy. He stayed there, killing five Germans and wounding ten more . . . and keeping off the main force. Not until his men had gotten into opposition did he leave. Then under the direction of this gallant soldier, who soon was to be killed in action, the squad built up a new defensive line and annihilated the Germans to their front.

During the afternoon of April 4th, the 47th Infantry (less the 2nd Battalion) was relieved of its defensive positions along the southern portion of the Ninth's sector by the 99th Infantry Division, and the *Raiders* made their way toward Kustelberg. Here, at 8 P.M. the regiment was to become part of a special task force.

* * * *

APRIL 3-4 produced two full days of fighting for the men of the 39th Infantry. On the 3rd, in one of those understandable misunderstandings of battle the *AAA-O* regiment's Company *F* moved too far out and left one of its platoons to hold some high ground west of the main Zueschen-Winterberg road. The 2nd Battalion had been sweeping since morning to clear the hilly region west of this road, and its doughs had been most successful. By late afternoon their mission was accomplished, but Company *F*, as stated previously, had pushed too far forward until it was without any flanking protection. As a consequence, an enemy tank-infantry group of much greater strength popped the *Falcon* platoon off its hill.

It was on the 3rd as well that the 39th's 3rd Battalion marched up to relieve the 1st Battalion in the key town of Winterberg. As the 3rd was positioning itself in the area, it became the recipient of heavy and determined enemy tank and mortar fire; and German infantry troops tried to make things uncomfortable for the newly-arrived battalion. Much of the foe's strength lay in his commanding position atop Hill 841. Here, in the tower of the Astenberg, he had an unsurpassed view of what the Americans were doing, and here he held sway during the early part of the action.

That was to change, however, for Company *L* moved out of the Winterberg area, up the hills to the west and in a most important engagement defeated the defenders of the Astenberg. The dominating hill was secured by nine-twenty that evening, and its capture increased the hold which the Ninth Division had on the enemy's highly-prized breakout area.

On April 4th the enemy was extremely sensitive to advances by the Ninth, and the alpine wooded tracts became the scene of many fierce skirmishes. At 8 A.M. the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 39th teamed in an attack against objectives in the vicinity of Silbach and Niedersfeld. The 1st worked forward against self-propelled gun and artillery fire and against obstinate German foot soldiers dug in to their front; doughs of the 3rd mixed it up with the enemy in a peppery fire fight, and neither the 1st nor the 3rd were able to reach their goals that evening. By nightfall, however, Company *C* had cut the Kuestelberg-Winterberg road at a point 2,000 yards to the northeast of Winterberg, and the 3rd Battalion had reached Hill 733 (Herrloh) approximately 1,000 yards due west of Winterberg.

During this same two-day period, the 60th Infantry had moved forward steadily. Its 2nd Battalion had launched an attack at the same hour as the 47th on April 3rd—with the battalion's final destination being the sleepy little town of Westfeld, which drops into the hills three miles east of Oberkirchen. A short, sharp engagement won the town for the *Go-Devils*, but the aftermath was not one of serenity. Later in the afternoon the Germans staged a bitter counterpush, which was beaten back by six o'clock that evening . . . and the ever-interested doughs of the 2nd Battalion scrounged about to see what made the town tick.

Meanwhile, the 60th's 1st Battalion took over from the 39th's 3rd Battalion in the bitterly contested area of Neu Astenberg, and the *Go-Devil* 3rd Battalion returned to its regiment after a short stay in Division reserve.

Eight o'clock the next morning found the 2nd and 3rd Battalions moving in unison on Alt Astenberg, the picturesque resort town which had been built a few hundred yards west up the highway from the northwestern base of Hill 841. It was a two-battalion envelopment that morning. The 2nd did not have any difficulty in its maneuver and soon was on the heights overlooking Alt Astenberg. On the other hand, the 3rd Battalion was subjected to the fire of artillery pieces, tanks and infantry from the area south of the town. This was brushed aside and the 3rd was able to have Alt Astenberg secured by 7:30 P.M.

At midnight on April 3rd, Combat Command *A* of the 7th Armored Division was attached to the Ninth Division. During the following day this command captured Groenebach and Niedersfeld against a well armed enemy, as part of the Ninth's drive to the north. That evening CC*A* became part of the special task force being formed by the Division. At 8 P.M., as the cool night air invigorated the former vacationland area, Brigadier General Hammond D. Birks, the Ninth's assistant Division commander took charge of Task Force *Birks,* the powerful and speedy group which consisted of the 47th Infantry (less the 2nd Battalion) and attachments: CC*A* of the 7th Armored and the 32nd Cavalry Squadron.

The two days of fighting ending on April 4th had given the arms of the Ninth such towns as Oberkirchen, Westfeld, Alt Astenberg, Niedersfeld, Groenebach, Hildfeld and—most important—the commanding heights of Hill 841. Morning was to see the opening of a new phase of operations, as a sweeping attack from the area of Niedersfeld got underway.

* * * *

EARLY in April it seemed apparent that the permanent sealing off of the enemy forces within the Ruhr Pocket was assured, and as a consequence, the Allied high command turned its thoughts to the east and a juncture with the Russians. At this time General Patton's Third Army had what amounted to an obstacle-free corridor of advance from Frankfurt to the rail-center city of Kassel; Marshal Montgomery's Northern Group of Armies was poised to strike across the North German plains and smash forward to Berlin; and the First Army had a clear field through the Kassel area to the Elbe River region.

There were three courses of action open to General Eisenhower, each had their advantages. Thrusting forward to the north brought visions, mainly, of the fall of Berlin to Allied arms and the elimination of *U-Boat* operations from the west coast of Europe, but it meant advancing over a river-crossed area whose bridges certainly would be destroyed by the time the Allies reached the river lines. Southward, any Bavarian *Redoubt* scheme of the Nazis could be halted by a sweeping thrust through the Nuernberg area, across the Danube and on to meet the Russians in Austria. In the center, the First and Ninth Armies appeared to be in a position to drive all the way to Dresden—especially the former.

Putting aside the obviously political and self-satisfying goal of reaching Berlin before the Russians, General Eisenhower decided that Germany should be split in two at first, and then defeated in detail. Plans were made and the high command of the Soviet Union was contacted regarding a coordinated offensive in the central sector by both the Eastern and Western Allies, and for a common line upon which both approaching armies could halt without danger of firing upon one another. The Mulde-Elbe river region was selected as the probable meeting line in the center. Moreover, a later drive designed to smash through to the south and link up with the Russians along the Czechoslovakian border and in Austria also was agreed upon.

For the operation chosen, the Ninth U.S. Army was attached to 12th Army Group and the First Army was instructed to push rapidly to the east and northeast. The imperative nature of this last directive stemmed from a First Army request to eliminate what intelligence sources had reported as a growing threat from the enemy to the northeast and east of Paderborn, Warburg and Kassel. The Germans were reported to be building up another line of defenses, and General Hodges wanted to reach these possible position areas and smash them before they could be developed into something strong. With permission granted the First Army to carry on its drive eastward, and with the decision of the Allied high command to concentrate upon the splitting of Germany in two, boundaries of the several corps of the First Army were changed, and the VII and V Corps were ordered to carry the offensive toward Kassel and beyond.

On the evening of April 4th—at midnight to be exact—the Ninth Infantry Division and its attachments came under the control of III Corps once again, as General Collins pulled his VII Corps out for the smashing drive which was to land the 3rd Armored Division on the predesignated line for meeting the Russians by April 13th!

* * * *

FOR four days the VII Corps had been stalled in the Winterberg area by the German insistence upon holding open the Meschede-Brilon roadway system as a last means of breaking out of the Ruhr Pocket and escaping to the east. Much of the strategy evolved during the week of the Ninth's return to the III Corps was concerned with eliminating that threat and forcing the enemy line back beyond Meschede. With this accomplished, a large amount of the foe's power would be gone and the reduction of the pocket would be well underway.

One of the first large-scale efforts to foil the enemy in the Meschede-Brilon area was instituted on the morning of April 5th by Task Force *Birks*. This task force attacked from the area of Niedersfeld and pushed ahead rapidly against a heavy opposition, the worst of which was from the hill region just to the southwest of Wiemeringhausen. Here 20mm and self-propelled artillery and small-arms fire in abundance met the American thrust. The terrain was unfavorable for tanks and the woods were full of the enemy, but the task force ground on. By nighttime General Birks and his men were in possession of six newly taken towns, and had reached as far north as Elleringhausen.

The remainder of the Division, in the meantime, continued to advance to the north and northwest, as its veteran troops cleared more outstanding terrain features, fought for possession of more towns and did their bit toward closing the pocket. The 39th pushed out with all three battalions against enemy defenses of small arms, tanks, S.P. guns, mortars and artillery. Men of the 2nd Battalion captured Silbach, up the road from Winterberg, and as the day ended the 1st Battalion was launching an evening drive on Siedlinghausen, 2,500 yards north of Silbach. At 9 P.M. the 1st stopped at the outskirts of its objective, however, and caught some rest before continuing the attack.

Meanwhile, the 60th Infantry shot its 3rd Battalion 5,000 yards north from Alt Astenberg that morning and by the time the 3rd stopped it had reached the vicinity of Hill Kopf, a 720-meter hill overlooking Silbach. Concurrently, the 2nd Battalion dispatched Company *E* to seize the ridgeline just north of Westfeld and to cut the main Nordenau-Oberkirchen road—both of which missions were accomplished.

The 47th's gallant 2nd Battalion was relieved in its position and placed in Division reserve on this day, although by nightfall the 2nd was on the move again. Destination was the Brilon area, where the battalion was to aid in halting any attempted German breakthrough.

Clearing out the ground to its front, the Division continued to surge to the north and west during the cloudy, showery day which followed. Town after town was destined to fall in this advance, and innumerable booby traps and roadblocks were unable to stop the Ninth from cutting roads and capturing high ground.

This was April 6th, the day when men in olive drab usually celebrated Army Day . . . and it was a full-fledged Army Day for the men up front. Five towns and many more commanding terrain features of the sector fell to the Ninth, as the not too glamorous *doughfoots* risked, and sometimes lost their lives in the rich Ruhr region. It was always the same. The infantrymen bolted off to a good start in the rough terrain, and as the day wore on they ran into increasingly determined resistance from pockets of die-hard Germans.

Task Force *Birks* covered itself with success on April 6th, minus the 32nd Cavalry Squadron, which had returned to Ninth Division control. The task force struck north on the right flank of the Ninth's zone, clawing tenaciously at the enemy and offering him no opportunity to reform or reorganize. There were roadblocks and anti-tank fires which delayed the advance on occasion, and the drive was not without its losses. Yet the push made excellent headway in the mountainous battleground. Seven-thirty that evening found the towns of Olsberg, Bigge, Antfeld and Helmeringhausen and the heights south of Antfeld in the hands of this task force. Then at this time the command was dissolved temporarily, and

BESTWIG FELL ENROUTE

the various units returned to their normal chain of command—with CC*A* reverting to the 7th Armored Division.

Concurrent with the drive of the task force, other battles were being waged along the twisting front. The 39th's 1st Battalion carried on its bitter fight for Siedlinghausen early in the morning, and that town was pocketed by the battalion by 1:35 P.M., following a rough and tumble engagement with a group of stubborn enemy infantry backed by tanks.

The 60th carried on a three-pronged attack with its 2nd Battalion pushing north at 8 A.M., and the 1st and 3rd Battalions following this with a jump-off to the west two hours later. It was with little effort that the 2nd moved against the enemy to gain and secure the huge hill mass north of Oberkirchen, which appears to form a sort of west-bank wall for the Sorpe streamline. By 3 P.M. the objectives assigned to the 2nd on this rolling ridgeline had been taken. The 3rd Battalion reached its objectives just as handily too, and by 5 P.M. its leading elements advanced to vicinity of Elpe.

It remained for the 60th's 1st Battalion, however, to encounter the stiffest fighting of the day for the *Go-Devils.* The 1st was engaged in a peppery fire fight and it was not until a most difficult struggle had terminated in victory that the battalion was able to advance to its objective, which was on the northwest portion of that ridgeline reached already by the 2nd Battalion.

During the period of these attacks, the 60th Infantry found 400 crates piled up in a former dance hall in Nordenau. They were the archives of the city of Aachen and proved valuable indeed.

* * * *

THE weather was clear and cool on the 7th. It was a Saturday, the last one most men of the Ninth were to spend in this sector. This was one more weekend away from home and family, one more day of wondering if it was to be the last . . . one more day without date, without feeling to those who lose track of time.

It did not add up to a *big picture* for the boys toting the weapons, or for the GI who wished he could have had a nice shower and shave before breakfast that morning. Yet these be-whiskered, weary souls were all part of it . . . the *big picture*. The Division was stretching its advancing military steamroller to the east and they were part of the whole shooting match.

In the zone of the 39th, the 1st and 2nd Battalions launched with great speed their contribution to the Division's 8 A.M. attack. The 1st Battalion hiked forward against mounting resistance to capture Elpe by nightfall. From the very moment the 2nd began to move to the line of departure it was engaged in fighting. Nevertheless, that evening both Heinrichsdorf and Altenfeld, to the north and south respectively of Elpe, were secured by the 2nd.

The *Go-Devils* rolled forward, too. Attacking infantrymen of the 1st Battalion added Rehsiepen, Ober Sorpe and Mittel Sorpe to their captured list. These towns were all within 5,000 yards to the north of Oberkirchen and along the Sorpe streamline. In the meantime, the 3rd Battalion cleared out a wide forested area, eliminating scattered strongpoints, and was able to halt abreast of the 1st Battalion for the night.

Early that morning—at four-thirty—the 47th had launched a pre-dawn attack with Company *L*, which was headed for Gevelinghausen, a small town one mile and a half northwest of Helmeringhausen. Company *L* battled against heavy small-arms fire out of Gevelinghausen, but took this objective by 9:20 A.M. Twenty minutes before that town was captured, the 1st Battalion jumped off to secure one of the mountain road nets.

At 3:50 P.M. Task Force *Birks* was reformed and the 47th Infantry was back with it. That did not call a halt to the advances, nonetheless, for this force carried on the drive to the west and excellent progress was accounted for. Bestwig, Nutlar and Heringhausen were among the towns which fell to Task Force *Birks* that afternoon as the Ruhr pocket became compressed.

Keeping on the heels of the enemy, the task force was executing a very difficult maneuver, the *Eifel Tower* formation. The main force of the drive hit toward Brilon, then pivoted to the west on Meschede and drove astride the creeklike Ruhr River toward that large town. In the course of events, both flanks of this attacking force were exposed, and the line at this point resembled a thumb with its nail pointinng toward the town of Meschede. The daring sweep succeeded in forcing back the enemy and proved an important part of the American mission of compressing the front to the north of Winterberg.

It became colder on the 8th, although the weather still was clear. In this crisp atmosphere the drive of the Ninth continued to the west—with the main effort directed against Meschede. Seven more towns capitulated to the inevitable, as did acres more of that high ground which so characterizes this region. The names of the towns became lost in the distance now, there were so many of them.

Raider footsloggers pushed beyond Heringhausen and Wehrstapel that morning, and along with other men of the *Octofoil* began the crushing of resistance to their front. Task Force *Birks*, of which the 47th was the mainstay, broke through rear guard defenses and eliminated die-hard elements of Nazism to reach the coveted prize of Meschede. By night members of the 47th Infantry's 3rd Battalion were battling in the streets of Meschede, fighting house-to-house and street-by-street for that town. Other infantrymen of this command had contacted elements of the Ninth Army at Eversberg and the ring was growing ever smaller around the Germans of Army Group *B*.

During the 8th the 60th had had all three battalions on line, chopping forward to cut off further the enemy and to reach all of its assigned objectives. And the 39th sent forward its 1st and 2nd Battalions against roadblocks, mines, booby traps and small-arms fire, as the strangling noose drew even tighter around the Ruhr Pocket.

On the clear, cool day of April 9th, Task Force *Birks* cleared Meschede of the last German hold-out and then went into well-deserved retirement upon being relieved by the 10th Infantry of the 5th Division, which division was now progressively relieving the Ninth Division on line.

In other parts of the Ninth zone of advance, the 60th and 39th Infantries made excellent progress against determined pockets of Germans and over ankle-bending terrain. Attacking and clearing terrain to the northwest and capturing ten more towns, the Ninth Division eventually was *pinched out* by the junction of the 7th Armored and 5th Infantry Divisions on April 10, 1945.

This juncture called a halt to the Ninth's role in closing the Ruhr Pocket. The Division had had an important part in trapping over 317,000 Germans, who became prisoners. With the closing and elimination of this pocket, and the loss of Army Group *B* and two corps of Army Group *H*, Germany lost her last great industrial region (with the exception of the Harz-Leipzig-Dresden area) and approximately *one-third* of her remaining effective manpower in the West!

For the Ninth Division, personally, the victory was one of satisfaction in having held closed the valves of escape to the east at Winterberg, Oberkirchen and in the Meschede-Brilon area. Had such a mass of men and material been able to break out and reach the enemy lines in the Kassel sector, the results might well have been disastrous and the war probably would have been prolonged.

* * * *

A great division.

—*Drew Middleton (N.Y. TIMES)*

Men of the 9th have reason to feel pride in their division. It has been hailed in the closely-written lines of countless war correspondents, complimented by leading military heads, praised by officers and men, not only those now with the division but with those who have left it—for hospital or for quiet graves overseas.

—*New Bedford (Mass.) STANDARD-TIMES*

GIRDING itself for the final thrust, the Ninth resupplied and rehabilitated itself on April 11th and 12th. Germany was reeling and groggy under the blows of the First Army and its Allied armies-in-arms to the north and south. But the fanatical *S.S., S.A.* and make-shift groups of resistance continued to hold pockets of opposition. Absolute loyalty to Hitler and fear of Allied occupation and its retributive consequences gave rise to well organized delaying units. One of these was concentrated in the rugged Harz Mountains to the east. Toward this area the Ninth prepared to embark, and the movement was led off by the 47th Infantry, which motored Harz-ward on the 11th to become attached to VII Corps.

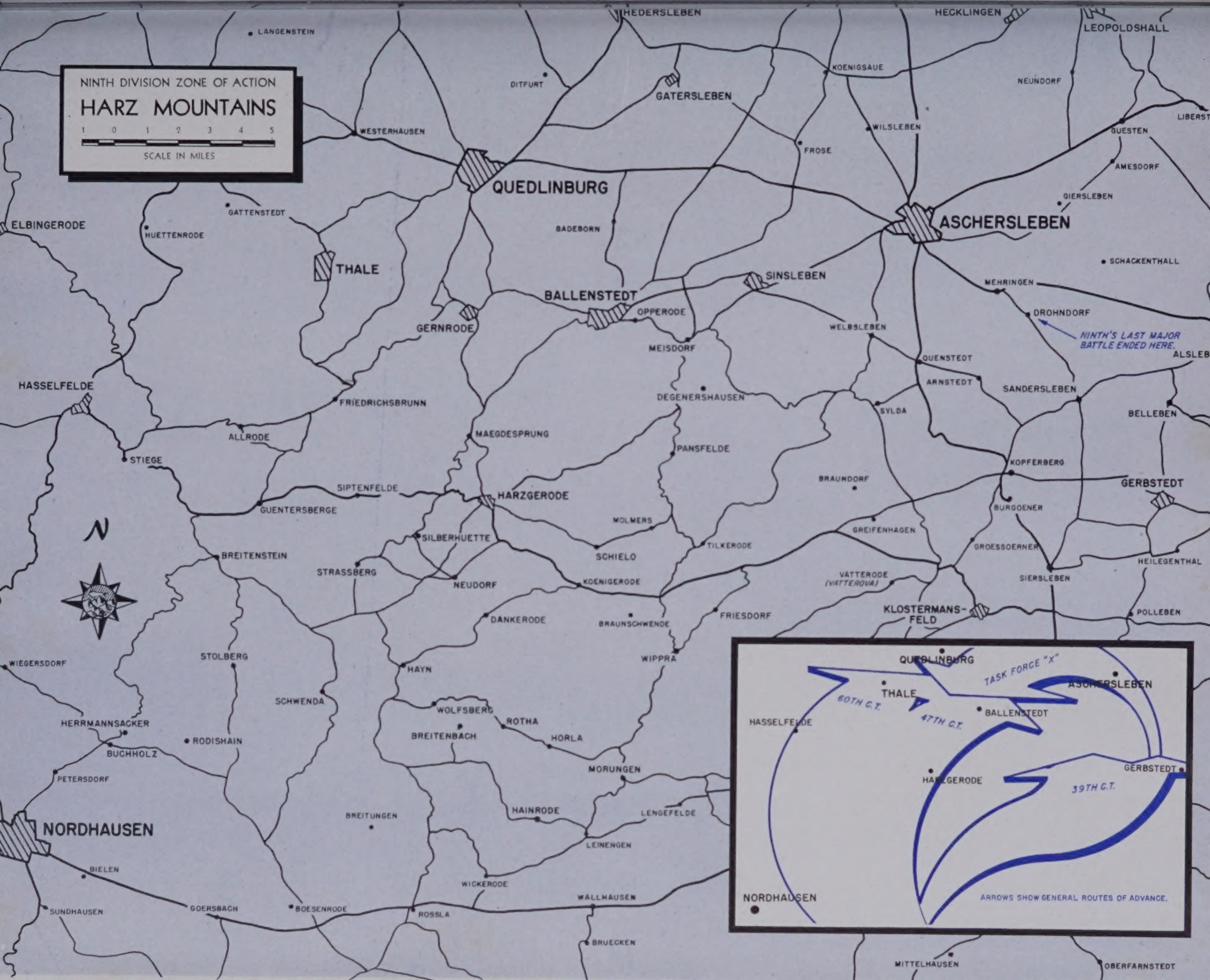
It was just prior to the Division's leaving for this new zone of action to the east that some very sad and unbelievable news was received. On April 12th it was broadcast throughout the world that President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the Commander in Chief, had passed on. His death was one of those hard-to-believe events, and it was felt by a majority of GIs that they had lost a member of their immediate family.

Old timers of the Ninth had seen the President during one of his visits to Fort Bragg, and the last occasion most veteran campaigners of the Division had to see F. D. R. was at the time of the review held in his honor at Port Lyautey. That had been a proud day for the Ninth, and now it was a sad one . . . sadder still because the man who had directed the war effort of America, who had been directly responsible for the Nation's rising state of preparedness which followed Pearl Harbor, was now gone in the line of duty. President Roosevelt had died before he was able to enjoy the victory he had tried so hard to win.

As President Harry S. Truman was being sworn in at the grief-stricken capital back home, men of the Ninth carried on. A buddy had *gone west* but the fight continued unabated.

Friday the 13th meant the start of a 150-mile motor march. From the east side of the III Corps zone at the Ruhr sector to the VII Corps area near Nordhausen, the Ninth Division (less the 47th and 60th C.T.'s) made its long trek. The 60th C.T. remained in assembly areas around Herhagen at this time, prepared to rejoin the Division shortly.

* * * *



NINTH DIVISION ZONE OF ACTION

HARZ MOUNTAINS

1 0 1 2 3 4 5
SCALE IN MILES
N
LANGENSTEIN
HEDERSLEBEN
HECKLINGEN
LEOPOLDSHALL
KOENIGSAUE
DITFURT
GATERSLEBEN
NEUNDORF
LIBERST
WESTERHAUSEN
WILSLEBEN
FROSE
GUESTEN
AMESDORF
QUEDLINBURG
GIERSLEBEN
ASCHERSLEBEN
GATTENSTEDT
ELBINGERODE
HUETTENRODE
BADEBORN
THALE
SCHACKENTHALL
SINSLEBEN
BALLENSTEDT
MEHRINGEN
OPPERODE
DROHNDORF
GERNRODE
WELBSLEBEN
NINTH'S LAST MAJOR BATTLE ENDED HERE.
MEISDORF
QUENSTEDT
ALSLEB
ARNSTEDT
SANDERSLEBEN
HASSELFELDE
DEGENERSHAUSEN
FRIEDRICHSBRUNN
SYLDA
BELLEBEN
MAEGDESPRUNG
ALLRODE
PANSFELDE
STIEGE
KOPFERBERG
BRAUNDORF
SIPTENFELDE
HARZGERODE
GERBSTEDT
GUENTERSBERGE
BURGOENER
MOLMERS
GREIFENHAGEN
SILBERHUETTE
TILKERODE
GROESSOERNER
SCHIELO
BREITENSTEIN
HEILEGENTHAL
STRASSBERG
VATTERODE (VATTEROVA)
SIERSLEBEN
NEUDORF
KOENIGERODE
KLOSTERMANS-FELD
POLLEBEN
DANKERODE
BRAUNSCHWENDE
FRIESDORF
WIEGERSDORF
STOLBERG
WIPPRA
HAYN
SCHWENDA
WOLFSBERG
HERRMANNSACKER
ROTHA
BREITENBACH
RODISHAIN
HORLA
BUCHHOLZ
PETERSDORF
MORUNGEN
HAINRODE
LENGEFELDE
BREITUNGEN
NORDHAUSEN
LEINENGEN
BIELEN
WICKERODE
WALLHAUSEN
SUNDHAUSEN
GOERSBACH
BOESENRODE
ROSSLA
BRUECKEN
MITTELHAUSEN
OBERFARNSTEDT
QUEDLINBURG
TASK FORCE "X"
ASCHERSLEBEN
THALE
60TH C.T.
HASSELFELDE
BALLENSTEDT
47TH C.T.
GERBSTEDT
HARZGERODE
39TH C.T.
NORDHAUSEN
ARROWS SHOW GENERAL ROUTES OF ADVANCE.

PREVIOUS to this time, for most Americans the words *Harz Mountains* had been the name for a popular brand of bird-food products back in the States. In times of battle the ordinary soldier has little opportunity to pore over maps of areas which are one or two hundred miles distant. Furthermore, there was no telling in which direction an advance might take place; therefore, glancing at the future was confined to tomorrow or the next day . . . to one or two miles beyond.

But *Harz* soon was to mean a hard fight to eliminate a ferocious die-hard German Eleventh *S.S. Panzer* Army which was bottled up in the region of the rugged Harz Mountains, and which refused to surrender. The men who made up the Eleventh Army were the so-called *Elite* of the *Wehrmacht*, and their assignment to this army was unusual.

Drawing the best non-coms and officer candidates in Germany from their schools, rest camps and hospitals, the enemy high command had formed three new divisions. These were well equipped, excellently armed and given the best supplies available. The officers and men in these divisions represented the finest fighting men that the Germans had left.

Originally, the selected troops were to have died defending Berlin and its approaches. However, it was decided finally to send them to the Harz Mountain region, where they could act as hold-outs in what was believed to be a natural fortress. As part of the Eleventh *S.S. Panzer* Army, these *Elite* troops were well suited for the work at hand. Many had been youngsters when Hitler came into power and knew nothing except the Nazi concept of life. Others were professional soldiers imbued with the spirit of National Socialism. Since these fighting men occupied a mass of terrain which was difficult to traverse in peacetime, this ground now became a ***tough nut*** for any Allied unit, or combination of units to crack.

The two *Elite* divisions which were to face the Ninth were the *Potsdam* and the *Scharnhorst* Divisions which, added to various parachute and *Panzer* regiments, other *S.S.* troops and hastily organized combat teams, made an opposing force of great strength. Paradoxically, the Ninth Infantry Division was to face in its last major battle of the war as in its first, the finest fighters Germany then possessed. For it will be remembered that in the beginning of the struggle against Germany, the Ninth had battled against the excellent ***Afrika Korps*** of the now-dead Marshal Rommel.

For a natural fortification, the Harz Mountain region has few equals. Rising like a man-made bastion out of the North German plains, this alpine mass is some 22 miles across and approximately 68 miles long. It is like a portion of the earth's surface which has been pushed out of the globe to heights of up to 4,000 feet, then depressed, sunken, raised again and fitted out with woods, streams, lakes and easily defended draws. Summits galore and excellent observation of an approaching foe gave the Nazi hold-outs a distinct advantage. Moreover, the isolated fortress rose above the countryside for miles beyond to attest this fact.

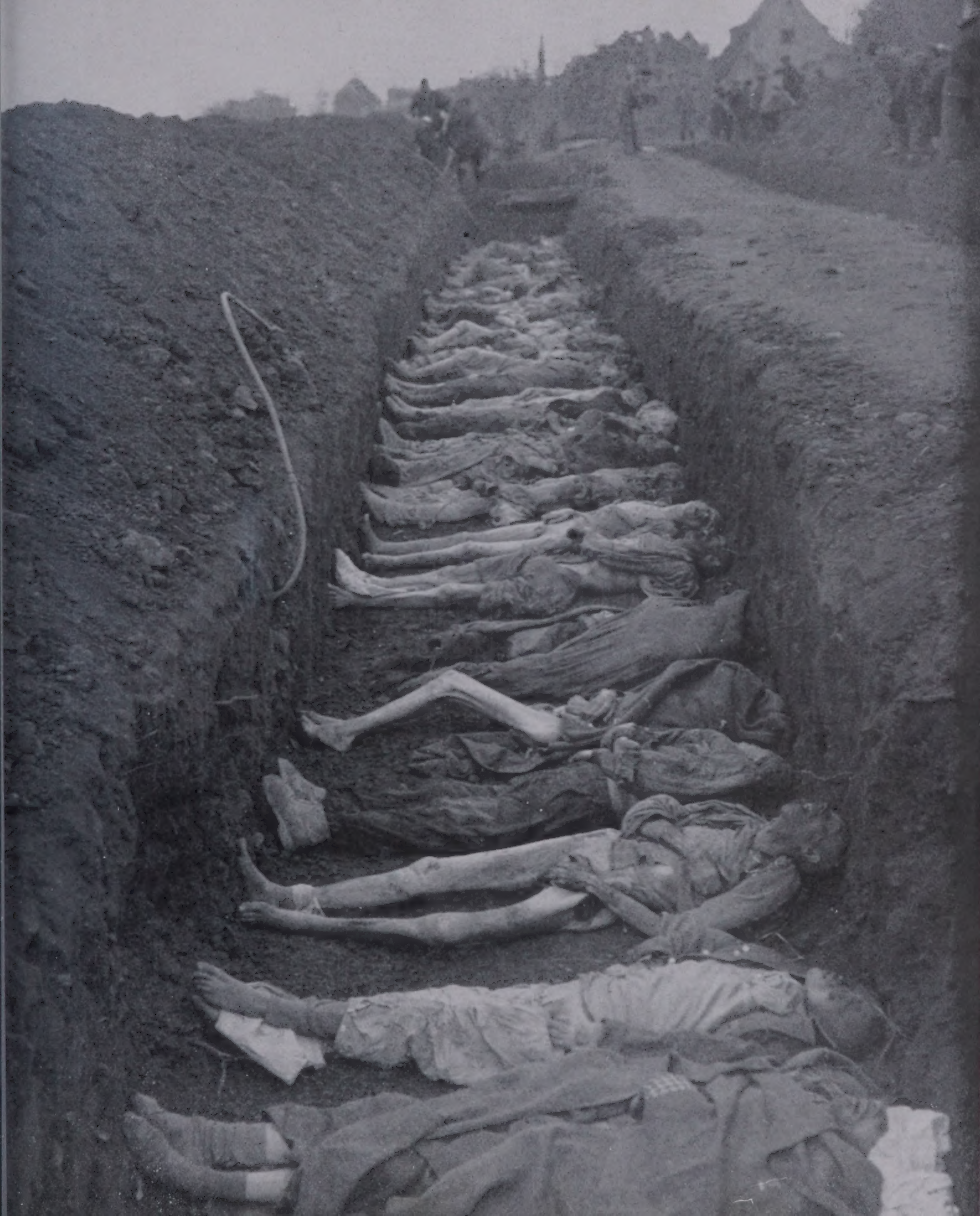
It was in the Harz Mountains that a highly industrialized enterprise had been developed, and it was here that Germany was rich in raw materials. But more than that, this region contained one of the most inhuman of all the enemy slave-labor centers.

* * * *

AS THE drive of the First Army rolled through the Kassel area and toward the Elbe, the Harz Mountain fortress was by-passed and then encircled. The reduction of this pocket constituted the last major obstacle facing the VII Corps, and the cities on the rim of the mountains, particularly Halle and Leipzig presented the last major fortified cities in the way of linking up with the Russians. Nordhausen, toward which the Ninth now was motoring, already had been seized by VII Corps troops—but the Harz area north of this city was fast becoming a bloody battleground.

Arriving at the city of Nordhausen on April 14th, the Ninth beheld a sight long to be remembered, for the Division had come face-to-face with one of Germany's most notorious concentration camps. The carnage and horror had been uncovered by tankers of the 3rd Armored and infantrymen of the 104th Division, and scenes beyond belief met the eye. Here the living and the dead were lying side-by-side.

NORDHAUSEN SADISM ▶



The living were too emaciated to move their limbs, the dead were unburied or half-buried. Germany's *S.S.* troops had stacked bodies in ditches . . . to make burial easier after the inmates had died!

Sobbing came from those who were able to moan at the approach of the Americans, and sunken eyes which pitifully looked out from the poor souls of the camp bespoke a suffering which the Germans had heaped so heavily upon non-Germans. These had been the slave laborers, the prisoners of a now-decadent Nazi nation. These once had been normal human beings—but Hitler and his ***supermen*** had taken them from home and family and forced them to work under the *S.S.* in the industries of the Harz. One group, which could not walk, had been underground for three months without seeing the light!

Nordhausen had a long-drawn-out system of torture. One method was to crowd several hundred prisoners into a courtyard. There, upon a raised platform, the condemned were hanged. By individual selection the group decreased in size. All the unfortunates were forced to stand by and watch their wives, husbands, children, relatives and friends choked to death. A break was never tried, for each forlorn soul hoped for the impossible—a last-minute reprieve.

The death column continued to stumble to doom. Timelessly and mercilessly, the courtyard filled and emptied. Ironically, Nazis had placed a fountain of *Kewpie Dolls* near the gallows. But these were quick deaths . . . other thousands were strangled slowly, beaten to death or worked to death. Nothing was overlooked by the methodical enemy to make the torture complete.

It was but a gesture when all male citizens of Nordhausen were made to dig graves and bury the victims of Nazi persecution. And it was of little satisfaction for the deceased when the neighboring townspeople were made to view this sight. Condoning and participating in such sadism could be repaid only by punishment in kind!

* * * *

The Division had received orders from VII Corps to attack on 13 April to seize the area BREITENSTEIN - GUNTERSBERGE - SIPTENFEIDE - STRASSBERG and to continue to the East. In order to best accomplish this mission, the 47th Infantry was ordered to attack North to take GUNTERSBERG and SIPTENFEIDE then East to STRASSBERG, SILBERHUTTE, HARZGERODE and NEUDORF and the 39th Infantry to advance initially on STOLBERG, SCHWENDA and WOLFSBERG then to attack East toward ROTHA and clear the southern portion of the Division zone. The 60th Combat Team was ordered to assemble vicinity HERMANNSACKER, BUCHHOLZ and RODISHAIN upon arrival in the Division area.

—Ninth Division Report of Operations

THE 47th Infantry reached the VII Corps zone during the latter part of April 11th. At this time, the *Raider* 3rd Battalion was attached to the 3rd Armored Division, and that battalion remained with the *Spearhead* armor until April 24th. When the Ninth resumed control over the 47th once again, the combat team was engaged already in a small battle; and by the 14th the *Raiders* had pushed through Schwenda and Hayn (as part of a VII Corps task force) to capture the town of Breitenstein after their return to the Division.

The sights of Nordhausen, and the knowledge that it had existed actually and not in fancy, were strongly on the minds of man who had passed through that town or in the vicinity. Fired to a justifiable hatred of Nazism and its creed, the men of the Ninth jumped into the attack upon the Harz stronghold on April 14th, driving north into the eastern part of the range. Objective was seizure of the area of Breitenstein-Guentersberge-Siptenfelde-Strassberg.

Advancing rapidly to capture Stolberg in its sector, the 39th Infantry seized as well the little towns of Rotha, Dankerode, Breitenbach and Horla on the edge of the Wippra Forest. Heavier opposition met the attack of the 47th, on the other hand, as strong *Panzerfaust* (one-man bazooka sticks) and machine-gun fire, and determined dug-in infantry blocked but did not halt the *Raider* advance on Guentersberge and Strassberg. Then the Nazis raided the 47th

Regimental sector, shot up Strassberg and captured American equipment.

But this nuisance raid was dealt with quickly. Guentersberge and Strassberg were taken and former *herrenvolk* limped out of Siptenfelde, as the 47th cleared that town. It was late afternoon now and the phase ended with 899 prisoners, an enemy field hospital, an ammunition factory (which had been making cores and caps for armor-piercing shells) and a signal depot, all captured in one day's fighting by the men of the *Octofoil.*

These were days of fast moving and the Ninth turned speedily to eliminate the remaining diehards of Hitlerism. Under VII Corps and Army strategy, the 1st Infantry Division was to keep coming in from the west and the Ninth was to make a wide right-hand sweep to join with the 1st in a double envelopment. Since the Ninth Army was blocking the north in the Halberstadt area, completion of this envelopment would eliminate all opposition within the pocket. As far as the Ninth Division was concerned, this strategy called for a continuation of the drive to the east and the beginning of a secondary mission, which involved driving to the northwest to capture the road junction town of Hasselfelde, about sixteen miles north of Nordhausen.

General Craig's plan was to have the 47th Infantry push off from Siptenfelde, capture Harzgerode and then drive on to the east. The 39th would take Neudorf and then march through the woods to capture Wippra to the southeast. From here the *Falcons* were to battle eastward. Upon arrival in the Division zone, the *Go-Devils* were to carry out that portion of the Division strategy involving the capture of Hasselfelde to the northwest.

In essence, the entire Division movement was part of a plan to reach the Ninth Army to the north, cut off the enemy in the Harz Mountains and to eliminate the Germans by joining up with the 1st Infantry Division which was driving in from the west along the northern portion of the VII Corps sector. As was true of the minutely planned operation at Merode Castle, this strategy required excellent co-operation of all attacking units.

* * * *

THE advance started at 8 A.M. on the 15th. Small arms, *Flak* and roadblocks failed to halt the advancing Ninthmen, and Division gains for the day were upward of 6,000 yards. In the zone of the 47th, Silberhuette fell following a stiff fire fight and Harzgerode was captured at the completion of a 3,000 yard advance by the *Raiders.* But once this last town—a key point in the area—fell, the going became much tougher.

To regain the initiative in the path of Company A, staff Sergeant Robert Powell began a one-man assault on an enemy strongpoint in the fact of automatic, small-arms and heavy weapons fire. The Germans shot the carbine right out of his hand, but Sergeant Powell kept going until he had hurled a hand grenade into the enemy positions and opened a path of advance. Over with the 2nd Battalion, Lt. Colonel *Chippy* Maness, the battalion commander showed that colonels know how to lead combat platoons, too. When the assaulting spearhead of his battalion ran into the devastating fire of a 20mm *Flak* gun, the colonel hastily organized a platoon and led them to flank and destroy this position.

To the southeast the 39th Infantry flushed out and secured Wippra, Friesdorf, Hainrode and Morungen. Then at 1:10 P.M. the *AAA-O* 3rd Battalion was directed to proceed east by means of a forced march and head for Gerbstedt, which was out of the woods and in the gently-sloping hills on the rim of the Harz fortress. From Gerbstedt, the 3rd was to fan out and occupy the towns of Sandersleben, Belleben and Alsleben—the hamlets which form an axis to the north of Gerbstedt. This move was designed to place the 3rd Battalion in a position whence it later could move to the north in line with a change in plans.

In the action which followed, the 3rd Battalion shot toward its objectives and both Sandersleben and Belleben were taken by midnight. It was deemed advisable, however, to await the coming of morning before attacking Alsleben—since *Falcon* patrols had reported the enemy there.

This movement of the 3rd Battalion was an important one and it was noted in the *Ninth Division Report of Operations* that:

> *The move of the 3rd Battalion 39th Infantry marked the first maneuver necessary to the execution of the new plan of attack for the Division which involved moving North and Northwest to contact the Ninth Army and to cut off enemy units still holding out in the HARZ mountains. 808 prisoners were taken.*

The Fourth Platoon

While the 60th Infantry's 2nd Battalion patrolled in the Harzgerode area, Private First Class Jack Thomas of Company E was becoming the first Negro soldier of the Ninth Infantry Division to earn the *Distinguished Service Cross.*

It had not been until March of 1945 that the Ninth received its first Negro infantrymen. They were especially gleaned volunteers, many of whom had accepted demotions to be able to fight on the front lines. A majority of them had been in service units with little chance for a lengthy period of basic infantry training. Nonetheless, their ingrained desire to get into the thick of it proved more than an adequate supplement to any shortness of instruction.

Contrary to the usual A.W.O.L. cases, the absent among these young volunteers went over the hill *to the front,* usually to have a "peak at the situation"! After a short period of indoctrination, one platoon of Negro troops was assigned to each of several companies of infantry as a *platoon,* to fight as an entity and to take its place on line with the white platoons.

The confidence of many was justified as the Ninth Division's *fourth platoons* fought on—a little more eager, perhaps, than the white infantrymen to carry out the letter of instructions. Their gallant contribution—which was all voluntary and need never have been made—is exemplified by the courageous actions of Pfc. Jack Thomas several miles from Harzgerode.

Thomas was leading his squad on a mission to put out of action a German tank which was in support of a strongly defended enemy roadblock. Private Thomas deployed his men and himself approached the tank, lobbing over two hand grenades and succeeding in wounding several Nazis. But by now both the bazooka man and his assistant had fallen.

Without hesitation the Negro squad leader picked up the bazooka and sent two rockets flying toward the foe. By his actions, Thomas prevented the hostile crew from manning the tank. But his work was not yet done. Two comrades were lying seriously wounded nearby, and he picked up the nearest and carried him to safety under a hail of "intense fire."

With all of its objectives gained on this day, the Ninth directed its strength toward sealing off escape routes to the east for these Nazi units yet in the Harz area, and toward making contact with the Ninth Army.

In speaking of April 16th, one could mention many things which happened in the mountainous battleground of the Harz. For one thing, the drive carried on the east and north, and the maneuvering and outflanking continued. The Ninth was holding a triangle of towns (Harzgerode-Strassberg-Neudorf) and the German reply to the Division's advance was stiffening of resistance in the form of small-arms and mortar fire.

During the 16th, which was a warm and clear day, the *Raiders* were directed to block all roads along the northern Division boundary from the area of Harzgerode northeast across the woods to Meisdorf. As a consequence, the regiment was relieved in the previously mentioned triangle of towns by the 60th's 2nd Battalion and the 47th Infantry moved out to accomplish its mission. The balance of the 60th had arrived in the Harz sector by now, and the *Go-Devil* 3rd Battalion immediately entered into a strong drive on Hasselfelde. Stiege, a quiet little hamlet with several crossroads and lakes, and halfway to the battalion's objectives, was captured. By evening Hasselfelde itself was in the hands of the 3rd.

Earlier that morning, at 4 A.M. to be exact, the 39th's 3rd Battalion began its fight against Alsleben. Three and a half hours later, the 2nd Battalion swept forward to clean the area from Friesdorf and Wippra to slopes of Vatterova and the road junction 2,000 yards to the southeast of the latter town. Alsleben was taken in spite of determined opposition from small arms and mortars; and Schielo, a

P.W.'s WERE MANY

forest clearing town approximately 5,000 yards southeast of Harzgerode fell on this day to men of the 2nd Battalion, 47th Infantry.

The bag of prisoners on April 16th was 1,065; in addition five German hospitals were overrun; and one veterinary company—complete with its records and personnel—was seized in the surrounding area. Furthermore, the Ninth now was in a position to launch its drive northward where it was to make contact with the Ninth Army, simultaneously sealing completely the enemy within the Harz pocket.

* * * *

FIGHTING increased on the 17th. The enemy was trying to break out of the pocket and the Ninth Division was carrying out its assigned mission of cleaning out resistance within the VII Corps zone. A clash was inevitable. Since the enemy was of the dyed-in-the-wool Nazi type, it was difficult for the infantrymen to flush them out of some positions. Yet when it came down to the final analysis, the victors in every major skirmish proved to be the Americans.

At 7 A.M. the 39th and 47th moved out, and they were followed in their attacks by the 60th Infantry some two hours later. The 39th's 2nd Battalion punched toward Aschersleben—the major small city of the area and a key center of rail and motor transportation. Aschersleben controlled the logical routes from the Harz Mountains to the Elbe River and the east, and the Germans were not disposed to give it up without a fierce struggle—if at all. Mortars, bazookas and small-arms fire blasted their reply to the 2nd Battalion; and as evening approached, the 2nd was having a "whale of a fight" inside the city of Aschersleben, the hometown of Field Marshal von Rundstedt—whose services might have aided the city fathers now.

The remainder of the 39th met only light opposition in its advance, and by midnight the regiment had kicked the enemy out of seven more towns and villages along the Wippra-Aschersleben axis.

Mars was good to the *Raiders* on the 17th, for the 47th brushed ahead to capture Pansfelde and Degenershausen . . . and a prize greater than either of these two towns. It was at this time that important archives of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1929-1942) were found cached away in a castle at Degenershausen (one of three such locations in that vicinity). Alert 47th Infantry military intelligence men were responsible for the amazing capture of this vital information.

First Lieutenant (Captain) David Silberberg, Sergeant Herbert Schader, Sergeant George Novak and Sergeant Charles Mangum had heard of this castle via a local *grapevine,* and a thorough quizzing of the castle's inhabitants followed. Their catch for this effort was both enormous and far-reaching. So important was this capture of archives, that fifty *C-47's* were requested to fly the massive files to safety and further examination. Included in with this material was the priceless and *entire* Library of the Berlin Academy of Arts . . . all intact.

To the west, meanwhile, the 60th Infantry was in the process of following out its orders to "move from the vicinity of Stiege through Allrode and Friedrichsbrunn toward Thale." In fulfilling this mission, the *Go-Devils* encountered some of the toughest fighters remaining in the *Wehrmacht.* Moreover, the vicious opposition to the 60th increased with the advance, and by the time the regiment had reached the vicinity of Maedesprung, the *S.S.* and *Panzer* forces had begun to fight with the vigor of maniacs. It seemed that the rumors of the *S.S.* being "hard to kill" were true on this front.

Despite this willed determination of the enemy not to budge, the 60th was able to clear the wooded regions to the north of Harzgerode and Siptenfelde. By nightfall the *Go-Devils* were battling inside of Maegdesprung, and had reached a point just south of the road junction within that village.

So ended April 17th, a day of rough encounter which saw the capture of 2,320 more enemy fighters by the men of the Ninth.

* * * *

THE 60th Infantry continued to have a hard fight on its hands as April 18th ticked onto the calendar. At Maegdesprung the defenders resisted bitterly with 20mm anti-aircraft guns fired at point-blank range at the onrushing *Go-Devils;* the enemy infiltrated into the sector of the 60th and he had approximately 12 self-propelled guns in operation within the regiment's sector during this time. Never in all its history had the Harzgerode Forest resounded to such a devastating clamor.

But the *Go-Devils* were made of sterner stuff than their adversaries, and by nightfall the 60th had outfought the Nazis to take over embattled Maegdesprung and capture Friedrichsbrunn, as well as to clear more of the forested hills toward Thale. In the course of one day's action, the regiment overran four hospitals in the Friedrichsbrunn region, one of which was defended from the grounds itself; and an additional four hospitals plus two aircraft factories were taken at Waldbeck to the east.

Both the 39th and 47th Regiments found light resistance in their pathways on the 18th, and their advance elements pushed forward with excellent results. Addition of the 4th Cavalry Group to the attachments of the Ninth during the preceding evening had been worked into a plan whereby the cavalry could aid the Division (39th Infantry) in clearing the flat, open terrain to the north and east of the mountains more swiftly. At 1 P.M. this mechanized unit and the 39th C.T. were combined to form Task Force *X* under the command of General Birks. The task force was motorized to a great extent and the cavalrymen and veteran footsloggers of the 39th barrelled through town after town as though they were on a railroad schedule. By nightfall this combination was fighting for possession of Quedlinburg, the nearest point to the Ninth Army troops that the Ninth Division had reached.

In the meantime, the 47th Infantry opened its fight for Ballenstedt, after a day which had netted the *Raiders* the forest rim town of Meisdorf and the town of Opperode (on the outskirts of Ballenstedt). Together with the other elements of the Ninth, the 47th had added to the grand total of 2,901 prisoners captured for the day.

The collapse of the enemy resisting within the Ruhr Pocket came on April 18th, and with that strongpoint lost the *Wehrmacht* began to focus its attention on the last remaining regions it held in the west. These were the Harz pocket and the Halle-Leipzig sector, plus some pocket of resistance along

AND THE ADVANCE CONTINUED

the Mulde River. German attempts to relieve the beleaguered garrison in the Harz Mountains proved very unsuccessful, however, and the reduction of that salient continued.

One of the biggest single factors in eliminating the final resistance in this fortress region was Task Force *X*. The cavalry under command of a Colonel McDonald, and the 39th C.T. under the temporary command of 24-year-old Lt. Colonel Frank Gunn ("probably the youngest man to command a regiment in combat") combined all their resources and worked together as a team. Because of this cooperation between the infantry and the cavalry, and because of their interchanging of commanders and common use of facilities, a new high in efficiency for joint operations was reached.

In its brief period of activation from April 18-24, the task force literally "took out the rear" of the Eleventh *S.S. Panzer* Army and helped seal the Harz Pocket. In addition, the smoothly working organization evacuated the amazing total of 14,000 German prisoners during the course of one day's combat, and captured all the field trains of the 9th *Panzer* Division, as well as those of the headquarters and supply groups of the ill-starred Eleventh Army. For three days and three nights, with fighting yet going on, these captured field trains of the 9th *Panzer* Division—complete with their operating personnel—were used to evacuate the many thousands of prisoners. And although there were not enough Americans to guard the trains, the evacuation continued . . . for General Briks offered the personnel running the field trains three square meals per day. Under this stimulus, the efficient train crews, in the words of the task force commander, "rendered us very efficient service"!

Adding up the *chips* after six days, the men of Task Force *X* could point with pride to 19,147 prisoners taken; 475 hostile vehicles captured, destroyed or damaged; 30 aircraft destroyed on the ground and 32 towns cleared of the enemy. Considering that the enemy troops had been among the most fanatical men left within the German Army to wage a conflict, the results obtained by the 39th C.T. and the attached 4th Cavalry Group were a tribute to their tenacity and intestinal fortitude.

* * * *

THE Ninth Division drive continued on the cold Thursday that was April 19th. At 7 A.M. the 47th and 39th C.T.'s launched their last coordinated attacks of the war (although the 39th was considered as part of the task force). Of all the Ninth Division units, the *Raider* 1st Battalion appears to have had the toughest fight of the day . . . at the large town of Ballenstedt. After numerous acts of bravery, that town was taken early in the afternoon, and the 47th began to sweep the area to the northwest of Harzgerode, simultaneously keeping a sharp lookout for the oncoming 60th Infantry troops with whom the *Raiders* were to make contact.

It was during the battle for Ballenstedt that one of the most audacious episodes of the campaign was lived by Private Paul King, Jr. of the 47th's Company *B*. The battle had been a lively one, and the numerically superior foe was peppering the area with death and destruction. Private King had had enough of this nonsense, so he went forward under direct enemy observation and fire . . . until he came upon the German troops. King demanded to see the enemy commanding officer. This done, the private who had more gall than two Caesars, calmly informed the German commander that if he did not surrender all the enemy forces within the area, that he (King) would have his battalion's tanks and infantry kill every soldier in the vicinity.

That did the trick, and the German C.O. capitulated with his entire command of 250 men and 15 vehicles to Private Paul King, Jr.—the one-man battalion of Company *B!*

Further to the north at this time, the *AAA-O* regiment (as part of Task Force *X*) cleared the important town of Quedlinburg in the morning and then pressed on to clean out four more towns and contact toward evening the 60th Infantry, which had swept forward and north from the Friedrichsbrunn-Maegdesprung area. Only small pockets of resistance remained now, and these were unorganized groups which held out because of what they feared upon capture, or because of their unyielding desire to die for their *Fuehrer*.

The results April 19th were especially satisfying. Filling the coffers of the Allied cause, the Ninth had corralled 3,565 prisoners, including 3 Generals; 100 planes on the assembly line in a factory; 500 typewriters; a complete flying school and 15 airplanes; many food warehouses and a military hospital which contained approximately 4,000 patients. In addition, the *Luftwaffe* had sent between 15 to 20 transport planes over the area during the first four hours of April 19th, and while the enemy did receive some of the ammunition parcels which these planes parachuted to the earth, much of this ammunition fell in the Ninth's zone around Meisdorf and was captured.

* * * *

HITLER'S last birthday anniversary during his lifetime fell on April 20th and—possibly as a birthday present—on this day the fate of the enemy garrison in the Harz Mountains was sealed. By nightfall it was safe to say, in reference to this locality, "All organized resistance has been dealt with!" For the weary men of the 47th and 60th Combat Teams it was a day of clearing and combing out designated sectors. Every outfit was in contact with friendly units on its front and flanks and the Division was up to its ears in booty and prisoners.

Only in the sector facing Task Force *X* was there any resistance of note on April 20th. Company *G* of the 39th, together with elements of the 4th Cavalry, met an enemy force consisting of a company of well-armed Germans with a 40mm gun in their support at Drohndorf. These *Krauts* did not want to give up their town, and evening found the enemy still holding out. Evidently this group was fighting unto the death.

Drohndorf was 4,000 yards northwest up the highway and railroad line from Sandersleben, and now it was the last objective of the Ninth Division's infantry. At 1:15 A.M., April 21, 1945, Drohndorf was captured by the 39th Infantry. Thus closed the last big battle in which the Ninth Infantry Division was engaged. Thus, too, did Company *G* of the 39th Infantry become the last company in the last battle to capture a town for the Ninth Division. After this engagement there was sweeping and clearing of pockets, and corralling of strugglers—but the battle as such was over.

Yes, organized resistance ended in the Harz Mountains on April 20th, and on that day another historic occurrence came to light. During the twenty-four hour period just ended, the Ninth Division had captured 8,644 prisoners—more than the total of its own combat infantry facing the enemy!

From this time on, patrolling to collect stragglers and screening of P.W.'s was the main activity. On the 21st, word was received that the Ninth shortly would relieve the 3rd Armored Division near Dessau. The following day the *Old Reliables* were to take over their new zone, comprising the west bank of the Elbe to the west of Aken. However, this directive ordering the Division to move as an entity was cancelled temporarily because higher headquarters believed that there remained pockets of the enemy still existing in the Harz Mountains. And since the Ninth was the only large unit operative in the area, it was desired to make certain of the security of this region before moving the Division.

It finally was decided to move out the 60th C.T. and the Division's attached 965th Field Artillery Battalion on the morning of the 22nd, and follow up the change of positions with the remainder of the Ninth as soon as the *spring cleaning* had been accomplished in the Harz. Various zones for combing out were assigned to each large command and the former zones of battle were tramped over once again in order to ensure that no German troops escaped their just fate.

But the end of the war in Europe was in sight. How long Germany could hold out remained a moot question. The search for America's Russian allies began, and momentary news was expected of a linkup somewhere along the broad front. One thing was certain, in the Ninth Division sector the final mopping-up stage had begun.

The bag of prisoners on April 22-23 was approximately 2,000. Next day the Ninth was directed to carry out its orders of the 21st and move to the recently captured city of Dessau—last strongpoint in the west to fall to First Army in its central zone of advance. In a last great move of the war against Germany, the Division journeyed east and began relieving the 3rd Armored Division of its zone along the Mulde River in the vicinity of that city. Once again, patrolling for stragglers began, and the endless and tedious job of sweeping for prisoners filled the cages to their brims. Meanwhile, the 60th C.T. was detached from the 3rd Armored, and along with the 47th's ground-covering 3rd Battalion rejoined the Ninth. By April 25th the 39th C.T.—last regiment of the Division to begin the journey east—had closed into the region, and now the entire Ninth Division was awaiting the inevitable juncture with the Russians along this predesignated line.

As the relief of the 3rd Armored was completed, the Ninth was assigned areas of security and control. In turn, each unit was given a portion of the Divisional area for policing, military government, screening and security. Patrols were sent over the Mulde River and returned with unbelievably large amounts of prisoners. And for safety's sake, a *no man's land* was established so that Russians and Americans would not be firing into one another.

MEET THE
RUSSIANS
WITH DRY FEET THRU
COURTESY OF
CO - C - 15 ENGRS

As the hours wore by, immense numbers of German civilians and enemy troops were swept in front of the Russians advancing toward the Elbe River. The river bank was crowded with persons trying to cross into the American lines; *Wehrmacht* detachments surrendered by the thousands. But only liberated Allied prisoners and German soldiers who wished to surrender were allowed to cross . . . although many civilians tried every method possible to gain entry to the West bank

Despite this wholesale surrendering, however, a patrol sent by the Ninth Reconnaissance Troop over the Mulde was met with heavy anti-tank, machine-gun and small-arms fire. Three *M-8* Recon Cars were knocked out and another disabled.

Then came the dramatic announcement that the U.S. 69th Infantry Division had met the Russian 58th Infantry Division at Torgau on April 25th. An artillery ovservation plane of the Ninth's 60th Field Artillery landed in the area of the Russian 118th Division and contacted the advancing Red units on April 26th, and the juncture of the Ninth Division and the Red Army forces was imminent. At six-thirty the following evening, a patrol of the 60th Infantry's 3rd Battalion contacted elements of the Russian forces . . . the Eastern and Western fronts were linked at last!

Colonel Van Houten, commanding the 60th, personally established contact with the commander of the 337th Rifle Regiment, 121st Russian Infantry Division at four o'clock the following afternoon. In the course of the evening, the American colonel arranged for a meeting of the respective division commanders in the near future.

The *Raiders* now contacted elements of the Russian 337th Rifle Regiment to their front. Despite the barrier of language, a comradeship developed rapidly between *GI Ivan* and *GI Joe*—particularly in the exchange of items which the Americans had and the Russians had not. Simultaneously, arrangements were completed for the formal meeting of the general staffs, and on April 30th, Major General Craig greeted the Russian military leaders at Pratau, on the west bank of the Elbe River. Booted Russians, with their massive epaulets and colorful medals, gathered with officers of the Ninth Division

ALLIES MEET FORMALLY

Hermann Henze

VICTORY AND PEACE SEEMED NEAR

as General Craig and the Russian Major General Sohonov exchanged good-will visits.

* * * *

AS APRIL 1945—fateful, fast, furious and victorious—ended, the people who gathered statistics at the Division headquarters began to look in amazement at the distances traveled by the fast-moving spearheads of the Division, and at the other stories told in the daily reports of the service units. For instance, mechanical repairs had proved a headache for the 709th Ordnance during this month. With the Division constantly on the move, both the Ordnance and Quartermaster men had grappled with problems. Moreover, the speed of the advance meant that casualties of a more serious nature had longer distances to go to the more permanent installations, such as the field and *Evac* hospitals. In the course of this evacuation, the Ninth Medics turned over their more serious cases to the 479th and 583rd Medical Ambulance Companies. Although losses were smaller than usual for the amount of ground covered, there were 183 killed, 1,512 wounded, 997 diseased, 597 injured and 56 exhaustion cases in the Ninth Division during the month of April—a sizable sum.

April was a headache for the 15th Engineer Combat Battalion, mostly because that unit had to remove the many roadblocks placed by the Germans as they retreated town-by-town. In one Harz city, Aschersleben, 28 of these obstacles were removed.

It was a month for prisoners, too. The Ninth captured about 55,000 of them—and could have had more, but it could not handle them that fast! Of course, even in its lingering death stage, the German nation had another new weapon. This one was

VICTORY ORDER OF THE DAY

Men and women of the Allied Expeditionary Force:

The crusade on which we embarked in the early summer of 1944 has reached its glorious conclusion. It is my especial privilege in the name of all Nations represented in this Theatre of War, to commend each of you for valiant performance of duty. Though these words are feeble they come from the bottom of a heart overflowing with pride in your loyal service and admiration for you as warriors. Your accomplishments at sea, in the air, on the ground and in the field of supply, have astonished the world. Even before the final week of conflict, you had put 5,000,000 of the enemy permanently out of the war. You have taken in stride military tasks so difficult as to be classed by many doubters as impossible. You have confused, defeated and destroyed your savagely fighting foe. On the road to victory you have endured every discomfort and privation and have surmounted every obstacle ingenuity and desperation could throw in your path. You did not pause until our front was firmly joined up with the great Red Army coming from the East, and other Allied forces, coming from the South. Full victory in Europe has been attained. Working and fighting together in a single and indestructible partnership you have achieved a perfection in unification of air, ground and naval power that will stand as a model in our time. The route you have travelled through hundreds of miles is marked by the graves of former comrades. From them have been exacted the ultimate sacrifice; blood of many nations–American, British, Canadian, French, Polish and others–has helped to gain the victory. Each of the fallen died as a member of the team to which you belong, bound together by a common love of liberty and a refusal to submit to enslavement. No monument of stone, no memorial of whatever magnitude could so well express our respect and veneration for their sacrifice as would perpetuation of the spirit of comradeship in which they died. As we celebrate Victory in Europe let us remind ourselves that our common problems of the immediate and distant future can be best solved in the same conceptions of co-operation and devotion to the cause of human freedom as have made this Expeditionary Force such a mighty engine of righteous destruction. Let us have no part in the profitless quarrels in which other men will inevitably engage as to what country, what service, won the European War. Every man, every woman, of every nation here represented, has served according to his or her ability, and the efforts of each have contributed to the outcome. This we shall remember–and in doing so we shall be revering each honored grave, and be sending comfort to the loved ones of comrades who could not live to see this day.

Dwight D. Eisenhower

their newest and most terrific self-propelled gun, the *Jagdtiger*—an S.P. anti-tank gun with a 128mm gun mounted on a *Royal Tiger* tank chassis.

But that was in the past now, for the most part at least. Berlin was surrounded and under reduction by the Russians. From yet Nazi Hamburg on May 1st came the joyous news that Adolf Hitler was dead—Himmler had proclaimed it and Admiral Doenitz became Germany's last ruler! Next day the Italian campaign—longest Allied sustained compaign—was ended as the 900,000 enemy forces in southern Austria and Italy surrendered to the inevitable. Berlin's fall was announced on the same day, and now the only organized resistance facing the Americans in the south was to the front of General Devers' Sixth Army Group—and these enemy troops were to give up the fight and the *National Redoubt* within 72 hours.

Everywhere there was chaos—and everywhere there was victory for the Allies. Germany was *kaput* . . . destroyed by the *Frankenstein* monster it had created. Certain groups, nonetheless, fought on during that memorable first week of May 1945. They would have made peace with the Americans and kept fighting the Russians. Since that could not be, they *forgot* about the American forces on most occasions, and continued to battle the onrushing Red steamroller, which was grinding to make complete junction with the Western Allies. Some Germans continued to cause trouble for the Americans, however, and one such group provided the Ninth Division with its final group skirmish of the war.

Patrols of the 60th Infantry Regiment became engaged in a fierce fire fight with 120 enemy troops in the vicinity of Burgkemnitz on April 30th. Three days later this same group was uncovered by the 60th, and the Germans stated (through their officers) that they would not fight the Americans—but neither would they give up. They wanted to protect their village post against the Russians. After they had been attacked by the Russians, the entire outfit gladly surrendered to the *Go-Devils* on May May 4th!

It was on May 4th, as well, that the last man of the war to be a casualty in the Ninth Division was evacuated. He was Private First Class Richard T.

ELBE CEREMONY

Seace, of Company E, 39th Infantry. Moreover, according to official records, Pfc. Seace was the only casualty in the Ninth for the first nine days of May.

Patrolling was limited now to cleaning out sectors of stragglers. Sometimes the load of P.W.'s became too much for a day's processing, and the Germans were told to come back another day! The beaten enemy came in formations, he came with his field kitchens and his personal belongings. And the flow kept increasing . . . as Germans sought to become prisoners of the Americans rather than of the Russians.

By May 5th, the Reds were on the far shore of the Division river boundary to the south. Next day, the Ninth Division bade farewell to the First Army and with the remainder of VII Corps came under the temporary control of the Ninth Army. For the veteran First Army it soon was to be redeployment to the States and preparation for a never-taken journey into the war against Japan. For the Ninth Division it was more stragglers and some good old loafing.

* * * *

THE historic message of General Eisenhower was received on May 7, 1945, stating that the unconditional surrender of Germany had been signed by a member of the German high command. All offensive operations were ordered to cease immediately, and troops were instructed to remain in place. The end of the war in Europe was set at one minute after midnight on the morning of May 9th.

Soon the day came. After five bloody years of war, Europe was at peace . . . and twenty-five million men and women laid down their arms. Victory in Europe, that joyous and festive *VE-Day,* brought a strange sensation of relief and misbelief to the tired veterans of the Ninth. GIs and their officers blinked their eyes at the first rays of electric lights, as the blackout of the continent ceased.

It was May 9th—the weather was warm and clear, and visibility was unlimited. Best of all, peace reigned for the Ninth after two and a half years of battling through eight campaigns. Now everyone knew that the sweat and the suffering and the death and destruction were at an end in the ETO. On the surface it would always be eight campaigns—*Eight Stars to Victory.* But there was a lot more than that in the minds and hearts of the average *Joes* who gave a silent prayer for the Divine Providence which had brought them safely throught the storm.

General Craig addressed over 1,000 liberated prisoners of war in their native French tongue, commanders spoke to their gathered troops. But what was felt inside of each man could not be expressed in words. Death and destruction had given way to hope that, perhaps, out of the ruins would rise a better Europe . . . so that this job would not have to be done again during the next generation.

The Ninth assembled in bivouac areas as the peace came, and with the tired warrior's habit of only temporary rest, found it hard to become assimilated in the victory at hand. Nobody knew what the future had in store. There had been talk of *points* for discharge, redeployment to the Pacific Theater of Operations, and of occupation within Germany itself.

Of the past, however, there was a pleasant reminder . . . a note of appreciation from the General who always was considered as an honorary member of the Division had arrived on the 10th . . . it was sent by General Omar N. Bradley to the commanding generals of the 1st and Ninth Infantry Divisions:

"This May 9th that passed was too big a part of your life to crowd it with recollections. It belongs to you and the world as the day on which the German war was ended. However, May 9th has a greater meaning for men of the First and Ninth Infantry Divisions. In recalling the day in future years, you can remember with great pride that it marks not the first, but the second unconditional surrender of an enemy you fought valorously for thirty long months.

"From the waddies of El Guettar where the First and Ninth Divisions fought shoulder to shoulder against crack elements of the Afrika Korps to the final surrender of German forces to the American Second Corps on May 9, 1943, the Tunisian campaign was an epoch, fashioned largely in the bravery, skill and achievements of your two divisions.

"American troops advancing through the minefields of the Sedjenane and on the road to Mateur, gave our Nation its first great land victory of the war, and the world its first great unconditional surrender of large-scale German forces.

"Since then I have followed your red numeral of the First Division and your tricolored insignia of the Ninth across the sands of Sicily, past the defenses of Troina, over the beaches of Normandy and through the hedgerows to Cherbourg. Side by side, your two divisions have fought the German army 700 miles across the continent to the inevitable and final defeat of the German nation.

"The American Army is studded with splendid divisions. But rarely have two teamed so expertly; never have two divisions fought longer and harder with greater skill or courage.

"Sometimes you may have felt forgotten. Sometimes you may have felt, as fighting soldiers do, the endlessness of our long road to Germany. Now that you're here, however, and now that many of you are ready to go home, I want you to know the gratitude of your Nation.

"And as your commander, I want to share with the millions of your friends and champions throughout the Army, their pride in your unsurpassed and monumental achievements."

A great leader had summed it up . . . little more could be said of the past and of the victory. Of the future, only time could tell. What mattered most was the coming of peace in Europe and the end of killing, mud and foxholes, going without food, eating the monotonous *K* and *C* Rations . . . the end of those long, sleepless nights of not knowing whether this one was to be your last.

Yes, there was peace now, thank Heaven. What an exhilarating feeling that was!

Section XII photography credits: Pages 342, 347, 353, 358, 369, 372, 375 are Official U.S. Army Signal Corps Photos; 351 by Author; 363, 367, 39th Infantry; 371 submitted by Fred D'Amone; 373 by 60th Infantry.

Metzgerei

Section XIII

PEACE and OCCUPATION

The Aftermath of War

MAY in Germany is a lovely month. The air is warm, but not stifling; the days are long and the light of the sun covers the earth almost until bedtime. In the mountains the brooks flow freely, and the trees give off the invigorating scent of late spring. For soldiers this is the beginning of *suntan* uniform weather.

May of 1945, however, found no such uniforms in the duffle bags of the Ninth Infantry Division. Men of the Ninth had worn their woolen uniforms in North Africa, even in the hot, fly-infested area of Magenta. They would wear them for the year that followed the victory.

But despite the occasional discomfort of the O.D. uniforms, the average GI was fairly happy with his lot at this time. There was a chance that the veteran campaigners of the Ninth would be sent home for discharge; there was a free and easy spirit of *living* once again. And there was an opportunity to visit in the towns of Koethen, Dessau, Bitterfeld and vicinity . . . to take it easy along the Mulde and Elbe rivers, and to write an occasional letter home under the first peaceful conditions that had prevailed for almost a year.

The Ninth was not destined to remain in one location, however, for the victory was but a few days old when the commanding general received word that his command was to occupy Ingolstadt and vicinity in the province of Bavaria. On May 13th the Forward Echelon of Division headquarters (including the Military Police Platoon) left the town of Koethen and headed for the city of Ingolstadt on the Danube River.

The weather was clear and the roads, for the most part, were good on this 224-mile motor trip. *Autobahn* travel was interrupted at almost every bridge by a detour, for the enemy had blown countless bridges in his retreat and as yet the American engineers had not been able to repair all the destroyed spans . . . there were so many of them.

It was an uneventful ride down to Ingolstadt, and it was the first opportunity for most soldiers to view the not-so-blue Danube (Donau). On the 14th the balance of the Forward Echelon arrived in the new headquarters city, and housekeeping was begun in the more or less permanent dwellings of the area. During May 22-24, the Rear Echelon of Division headquarters pulled into the new area in two groups, and by now the city was becoming well organized as a military center.

Ingolstadt is an ancient city, and in May of 1945 it was a well shot-up city. Rubble was in the streets and the people were a bit confused. Not that Ingolstadt was obliterated like Dueren or Cologne, for it was not. No, once or twice the AAF or RAF had aimed at the main bridge over the Danube and let fly their loads of bombs. There had been war industries going full blast at the time; the chemical works and the leather goods shops. But it was the bridge that the Allied bombardiers were trying to pin-point (and missed).

Whatever the target, parts of the city were in ruins, and the short fight between the advancing American Seventh Army and retreating *S.S.* remnants had done the rest. Bridges over the Danube were in sad condition, and it was only by an ingenious job of repair and planking that pedestrians could cross to the south bank.

> . . . To the new members of the Ninth Division, most of whom have come from other famous units of our army, the job is now yours. Your effort will reflect itself on the reputation now held by the Division to which you belong.
>
> —Brigadier General Reese M. Howell

Over on that shore was an old fort, and inside the city itself were several former *Wehrmacht* buildings. There were camps for the D.P.'s here, too; and those unfortunates of the war—the displaced persons—now were freed from slave-labor and the concentration camps. But they were unwanted by most people, and not knowing where to go or how to make the best of their release from Nazi overlords, they walked the streets in a daze. This was Ingolstadt, the site where conqueror Napoleon crossed the Danube—a city of ancient fortifications and a 13th-Century gate.

Ingolstadt had been a center of Nazism, but it was also a center of predominantly Catholic Bavaria. It was situated halfway between the National Socialist shrines of Nuernberg and Munich (Muenchen); Nuernberg, where the evil philosophy of Hitlerism flourished and Munich, where it began with a beer-hall *putsch* in 1923.

For the men of the Ninth Division, the green and dirty waters of the Danube meant little, except a dangerous place to swim (because of the swift current). Division Forward moved near the *Autobahn*, bunking in the apartments and houses surrounding a former German government building. Division Rear set up in a kaserne at the center of town, which formerly was a Nazi barracks. Of late it had housed the poor souls from the slave-labor camps, and they had not been used to the comforts of such structures. As a consequence, the buildings were something less than pleasant to the nostrils. Beds were the hard wooden type of double bunk, with equally hard straw mattresses. Plumbing in washrooms seldom worked according to plan. But in the Rear Echelon, as in the Forward, hot showers soon were in order.

Meanwhile, the balance of the Division moved to the south by regiments. The *Raiders* motored out of their northern bivouac at seven-twenty on the morning of May 16th and headed for the vicinity of Wolnzach, a 240-mile jaunt which ended at that location at eleven o'clock in the evening. On the 24th the regiment became transplanted to the town of Schrobenhausen, and its battalions and attachments spread out over the area which encompasses the small towns of Gerolsbach, Edelshausen, Hohenwart, Scheyern and Steingriff. At first American troops were allowed to occupy only public buildings, hotels and barracks. Thus many units—like the *Raider* 1st Battalion—built their own quarters, complete with electricity.

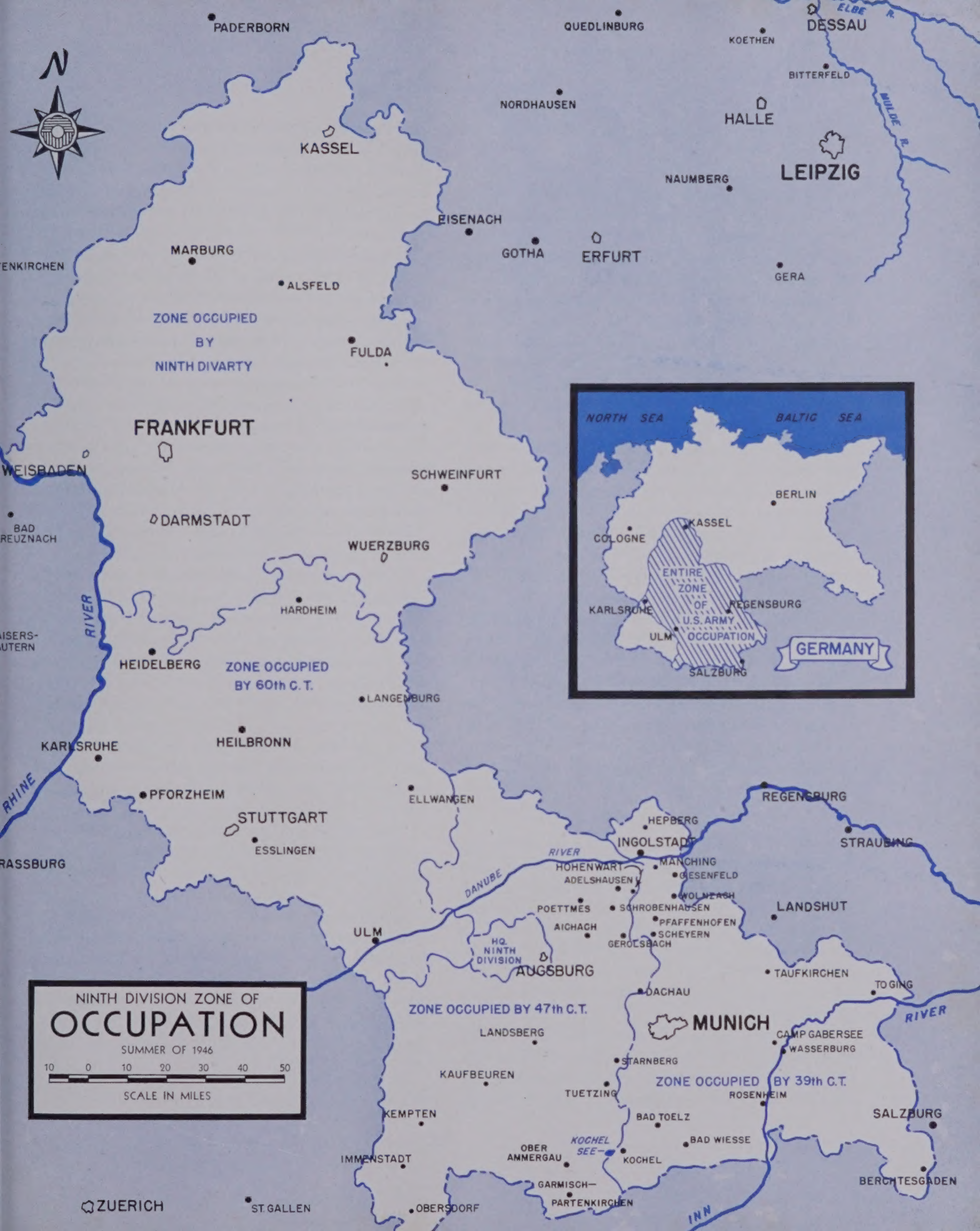
The 60th Infantry Regiment rolled out from Bitterfeld on the 16th, and that took them some 280 miles and into the woods around Wolfersdorf. Then on May 23rd, the *Go-Devils* left the Wolfersdorf area and motored twenty miles via the *Autobahn* to Geisenfeld, Manching and vicinity.

Men of the 39th Infantry moved by truck down the excellent stretches of the *Autobahn* and its alternate routes, to make good time from the highways of Dessau to the area southwest of Ingolstadt. It was the 22nd and the weather was cool and overcast. Regimental headquarters was set up in the vicinity of Aichach, the 1st Battalion bivouaced around Zerbst and the 2nd and 3rd Battalions hung their helmets in the Gaulzhofen and Pottmes areas.

The artillerymen of Divarty roared into the Pfaffenhofen locality and spread out and across the *Autobahn,* through quaint hamlets and towns. But like the Ninth's headquarters, they were not in a big city. Munich, Germany's fifth largest city was part of the Third Army headquarters zone, and the Ninth was to remain situated around the small city of Ingolstadt for some time. However, if the men of the Division believed that they were faring badly, the 15th Engineers, in the wooded hills of Hepberg —up the *Autobahn* from Division headquarters—and the attached 746th Tank and 899th Tank Destroyer Battalions had it worse. Because of their equipment and vehicles, they had been placed in more open country, and nearly everyone lived under canvas . . . in true tent city style.

Soon the various areas were shipshape and some semblance of order was created out of the war-suffering countryside and the bullet-nicked towns. Suburban Bavaria had not been hit as badly as other regions through which the Ninth Division had passed; moreover, it was fairly productive farm country.

Of course, there were the chores of K.P., except when P.W.'s did that task. And there was guard duty, prisoner chasing and tending to all those many



NINTH DIVISION ZONE OF
OCCUPATION
SUMMER OF 1946

N
PADERBORN
QUEDLINBURG
KOETHEN
DESSAU
ELBE R.
BITTERFELD
NORDHAUSEN
HALLE
MULDE R.
KASSEL
LEIPZIG
NAUMBERG
EISENACH
GOTHA
ERFURT
GERA
MARBURG
ENKIRCHEN
ALSFELD
ZONE OCCUPIED BY NINTH DIVARTY
FULDA
FRANKFURT
WEISBADEN
SCHWEINFURT
BAD REUZNACH
DARMSTADT
WUERZBURG
NORTH SEA
BALTIC SEA
BERLIN
COLOGNE
KASSEL
ENTIRE ZONE OF U.S. ARMY OCCUPATION
KARLSRUHE
REGENSBURG
ULM
SALZBURG
GERMANY
HARDHEIM
RIVER
ISERS-UTERN
HEIDELBERG
ZONE OCCUPIED BY 60th C.T.
LANGENBURG
HEILBRONN
KARLSRUHE
RHINE
PFORZHEIM
ELLWANGEN
STUTTGART
ESSLINGEN
RASSBURG
REGENSBURG
HEPBERG
INGOLSTADT
STRAUBING
RIVER
HOHENWART
MANCHING
ADELSHAUSEN
GEISENFELD
DANUBE
WOLNZACH
POETTMES
SCHROBENHAUSEN
LANDSHUT
PFAFFENHOFEN
AICHACH
SCHEYERN
GEROLSBACH
ULM
HQ. NINTH DIVISION
AUGSBURG
TAUFKIRCHEN
DACHAU
TOGING
ZONE OCCUPIED BY 47th C.T.
MUNICH
RIVER
LANDSBERG
CAMP GABERSEE
WASSERBURG
STARNBERG
KAUFBEUREN
TUETZING
ZONE OCCUPIED BY 39th C.T.
ROSENHEIM
KEMPTEN
BAD TOELZ
SALZBURG
KOCHEL SEE
BAD WIESSE
OBER AMMERGAU
KOCHEL
IMMENSTADT
BERCHTESGADEN
GARMISCH–PARTENKIRCHEN
ZUERICH
ST. GALLEN
OBERSDORF
INN
10 0 10 20 30 40 50
SCALE IN MILES

tasks which seem to go with occupying a conquered land.

The old German marks which GIs had been using for a variety of purposes during the days of combat now were found to have the same ten-cents value as the Allied occupation marks, and the people were eager to accept them. Haircutting was cheap, when one found a barber; and shaves were accomplished by the cold water and pulling method in the German *Frisseur* (barber) shops. Concurrently, old man Krautwald, who had a shop near the Hotel Adler in Ingolstadt, began a campaign to get GI trade for his 1890-style photographic studio. Last but not least, local breweries were investigated to the fullest by the occupying Ninth.

The end of May found the Ninth Division fairly well situated and in its first *home* since Winchester, England. Command of the Division had changed, too. Brigadier General Jesse A. Ladd took over the reins of the Ninth which had been vacated previously when Major General Louis A. Craig, the brilliant tactician and fighting leader of the Ninth through Northern France, Belgium and Germany, left for command of the XX Corps. Shortly after General Craig left, General Birks, the assistant Division commander took off for the States and another command. Early June brought still other changes of command, as Colonel John G. Van Houten was appointed assistant Division commander. The Ninth was beginning the sweeping turnover which was to effect its personnel so greatly—and for once it started at the top.

* * * *

IN JUNE of 1945, divisions still were intact and quite plentiful in the ETO, and the veteran campaigners of many famous outfits bordered the Ninth Division. To the north was the old partner and friend of the Ninth, the 1st Infantry Division. To the southwest were the 45th and 3rd Infantry Divisions. Almost in every direction one could drive for but a short distance and reach the headquarters of a veteran unit.

Consequently, since unit areas were much smaller at that time than during the latter part of the occupation, journeys of any length crossed many zones of responsibility. Each headquarters had its roadblocks, pass-checking details, motorized patrols and armed outposts. As a matter of fact, traveling was a continuation of stop, check and go. Coupled with the destruction of war, wayside check-points necessitated the carrying of rations for longer periods than would be normal.

Weapons were carried habitually, and helmet liners and boots were worn at all times in those days. Curfew was enforced with an efficient strictness . . . both for soldiers and for civilians. Fraternization with the enemy was illegal and punishable by fines which began at sixty-five dollars.

Along the battered pavements of the Ninth Division zone rolled thousands of carts pulled by barefooted, homeless, bewildered people. Everything they owned was piled onto their human-drawn wagons. Sometimes, five or six bronzed wayfarers would be pulling one cart. The people appeared to be nationals of other countries, as well as the native victims of bombing and war. Their speeds were slow but their ardor was great.

Bicycles carried unbelievable loads, and children struggled under immense rucksacks. Old women, old men—they were all in these caravans. The weather was warm and they wore as little as possible . . . they did not have much, anyway. There were other caravans too, gangs of German and Hungarian P.W.'s being marched to and from the task of clearing the debris of war. Everyone was walking, pulling or cycling. Moreover, for the German population, *Old Dobbin* had replaced the automobile. Such cars as there were burned wood and fumed along the pocked roads.

Army trucks and jeeps were the only good transportation, and the roadsides were filled with would-be hitchhikers—of course, giving a lift was *verboten,* forbidden in any language.

The aftermath of war was not a picture one would hang on the living room wall to show his children; nor was it something one could forget within a few years. Furthermore, it was to get worse as time went by. And the pinch of war—which had not been felt too greatly by those within the locality under the control of the Ninth—shortly was to become more apparent.

In this dismal atmosphere, the Division Special Service Officer, Captain Charles Fisher and his crew of motion-picture projector operators became doubly important for the morale and entertainment of the Division. First of all there was nothing to do in the evenings except wish and write. Many of the men in the Ninth had almost double the point score necessary for rotation to the States. There was no fraternization allowed and the advent of an evening at the movies was a real treat.

But the twelve movie projectors which then were assigned to the Division were battle casualties. They were 16mm affairs which held together like the *Model T. Fords* of the early Twenties; films were battered badly from having been shown so many places so many times before reaching the Ninth Division. Be that as it may, the *Notorious* Theater, in Ingolstadt (a former beer hall converted into a theater by the Division Special Service crew) was hot and crowded every night. Men were trucked in from the surrounding battalion areas and brought to see their movies, and although machines broke down and film splices came apart, the show went on. Sound tracks cracked and sometimes the amplifiers did not make enough noise to be heard in the front rows. But it was a welcome diversion.

Out in the regimental areas and in the Divarty zone, other film projectors were set up. As yet, however, the whole thing was only a stopgap aid to give the battle-weary and homesick veterans of the Ninth Division a chance to rest and forget their problems. To help even further, Warrant Officer Bob Warren, his hot trumpet and the *Notorious* Swing Band began to give out with classical, semi-classical and swing music at the *Notorious* Theater. This excellent organization, a part of the Ninth Division Band, was one of the most professional aggregations that men of the Ninth had seen perform in some time. And that was not all the SSO dug up in the way of entertainment. There were soldier shows and there were the USO troupes—such as the *Frolics Follies*, which arrived to perform for one week in the Ninth Division zone during June (". . . with four American Girls!").

The artillery battalions were planning their diversions, too. Battalion competitions in softball, track, volleyball and swimming were underway. The artillery bands were forming, and even a stage show was in production. The 47th Infantry had its *Raider Hot Shots* band and held a *Stage Frolics* soldier show, while the 60th staged "The Devil With It." *Falcons* took care of their own, as well.

At the Athletic Center in Ingolstadt, Lt. Colonel Arden C. Brill grabbed hold of the Division Athletic program, and he began building up a goodly supply of equipment. From far-off Eisenach to the north, athletic uniforms and equipment were obtained from the Ninth U.S. Army just prior to that army's moving out and allowing the Russians to come over to the new line of demarcation.

Slowly but surely, June was becoming a month of organization, planning and deeds. The Ninth Medical Battalion established itself in Ingolstadt; the 34th Evacuation Hospital (and its nurses) moved in next door to the Division Rear Echelon, and the 709th Ordnance and Ninth Quartermaster units set up shop at the other end of town in the area of former German counterparts.

Many companies were yet under canvas, however, and others had insufficient facilities for messing under permanent cover. Hot and cold running water brought smiles or frowns of disbelief in other localities; dry cleaning and laundry were a problem. Combat rations soon were to be abandoned in favor of the Post Exchange system; however, nobody knew just how soon the PX stores would be set up and placed in operation. In the meantime, cigarettes became more scarce and candy was at a premium. Yet it was peaceful, and there was a chance that shipments of high-point personnel shortly would be forthcoming.

* * * *

JUNE brought official happenings as well as pleasures and guard duty. Mid-June found Colonel William C. Westmoreland stepping up from Division chief of staff to become commander of the 60th Infantry Regiment. In Colonel Westmoreland's place as chief of staff came Colonel James P. Hulley.

The ever-alert patrols of the Ninth were beginning to have results in their sweep for Nazis still at large and black-marketeers. Late in June, *S.S.* General Ernst Sachs, Himmler's former communications chief and 25 other *S.S.* men were apprehended along the *Autobahn,* after an alert GI had noted their actions with suspicion. All these *S.S.* men were riding in a German omnibus which halted near Ingolstadt. The M.P.'s quickly sent a patrol to follow up the GI's warning, and this fast-acting unit captured the General and his companions, who proved to be the leader and members of a fanatical *S.S.* Division. Later, at this same spot, five more truckloads of troops from the same outfit were captured as they passed the area.

What had happened was that these men, all remnants of the *S.S.* Nibelungen Division, had tried to escape from capture and their attempt was nipped in the bud before they could get too far. The trucks had been following a convoy of enemy prisoners led by an American officer, and the general and his men had "become lost" after leaving Munich. They were found by the Ninth and herded into more proper and more easily *found* quarters in the *Notorious* P.W. stockade that night!

Toward the end of the month another discovery made news. Lieutenant John T. Bonnett and some fellow members of the 47th 2nd Battalion made an excellent finding in the town of Scheyern. It was recovery of the first portion of the complete works of the Munich Art Gallery, which had been hidden away.

It was at this time, too, that an announcement came of the Ninth's future. The Division was withdrawn from the list of available combatant units and was informed that it would remain in the American zone of Germany as part of the permanent occupation force. That force had been well planned during the preceding months, and now its emergence took form.

On June 10th, the Ninth and Fifteenth U.S. Armies ended their ETO duties and the Third and Seventh Armies were designated as the occupying commands. These last two were to divide the American zone, the Third taking over the eastern half and the Seventh assuming responsibility for the western sector. Currently, 12th Army Group (now commanded by General Devers) was in charge of both armies. However, the setup was to be changed shortly, and SHAEF was to give way to USFET (United States Forces European Theater). The latter headquarters was to control the occupation and the American forces in the European Theater, with its headquarters location situated in the crumbling city of Frankfurt—at the massive, modern, undamaged I. G. Farben Building. Austria was considered as a separate command, and USFA (United States Forces in Austria) was to be under the command of General Mark W. Clark.

In the zone of the Third Army, the Ninth Division remained part of XX Corps. That Corps was located in the Tuetzing area, southwest of Munich; while Third Army headquarters area extended from the road ring to the north of Munich through Bad Toelz and to the Austrian border (where began the French boundary).

Military Government, the Army's civilian population governing arm, was under a separate organization, although responsible at that time to the military commander of the area. Food distribution, housing control and the one million and one things connected with the occupation of Germany, other than the security activities, were in the hands of this branch. Since much of the occupation cost was being borne by the recently defeated enemy, and since civilians apprehended by the military often were tried by Military Government courts, the association between the security and governing branches of the Army of Occupation became close.

Already, the Russians had moved down to the predetermined line of zonal borders and now the French, British, Russians and Americans jointly were taking part in the running of Germany. Pressing need arose at this time, however, for men and equipment to be shifted quickly to the Pacific. It was believed that the invasion of Japan would take an excessive amount of fighting men, and that the losses incurred in carrying out such an operation would be great.

To carry out its plan, the War Department had ordered certain units sent directly to the Pacific zone, while still others were redeployed through the United States. For this purpose, and for the discharging of personnel who had 85 points or above, massive staging areas were put into use. One was at Marseilles, and others were along the former *invasion* coast of France and at Antwerp. On June 16th, five more divisions were ordered to the Pacific via the U.S.A.; they were the 13th Armored, 2nd, 5th, 44th and 87th Infantry Divisions. On this day as well, the 4th and 8th Divisions sailed away from Europe.

Next day the Army showed that the occupation was considered a semi-permanent setup, for it announced that plans were being formulated to permit wives to join their husbands in the ET when conditions permitted. That brought smiles and it also brought dubious remarks . . . time would show, nevertheless, that the Army meant every word it had announced.

* * * *

ONE June afternoon, the men of the Division Special Service Office were preparing to hold a USO performance in the now well-built-up bivouac area of the 746th Tank Battalion. An appropriate site for an amphitheater had been selected and the stage already was constructed. Arrangements were completed and the men prepared to see a veteran troupe of American girls and men perform.

In selecting the camp area for the tankers, a flat, semi-wooded locality had been chosen, and it so happened that below this very bivouac area was an old German fort dating back to 1880. Enemy powder and ammunition were stored below but were kept under guard.

On this particular day, Captain Scott heard that smoke was drifting out of a first floor window of the fort. He grabbed a fire extinguisher and in company with other members of the 746th rushed to extinguish the blaze. But the fire soon spread and when flames began licking forward to the storage rooms, a general alarm was sounded—as everyone took off from the area with great speed. Then the fire reached the magazine and the 746th Tank Battalion area blew up! Shrapnel was scattered throughout the camp and the force of the explosion burst open locked steel doors and shutters. Moreover, the masonry crumbled and onlookers could see the interior of the fort. It was as if another war had begun.

Another portion of the fort blew up shortly thereafter, and it was several days before the hard-working tankers had wetted down the fort and guarded the blaze sufficiently to extinguish it. Colonel Frederick C. Feil, the Division G-3, was reported to be the only one injured in the inferno; and as the sound of battle died down, tankers returned to reclaim their shaken-up vehicles and belongings. By special arrangement, the USO troupe entertained the tankers in another *less explosive* spot that evening.

Other shows were more fortunate in their sites. Early July saw the massive airdrome outside the city of Augsburg filled to capacity with soldiers and nurses eager to catch a glimpse and hear at first hand the antics of Jack Benny. With this famous comedian were harmonica-virtuoso Larry Adler and torch-singer Martha Tilton. For three days these entertainers brought back memories of home to groups of men and women in O.D. seated on the concrete floor below. Soldiers roared approval of Martha Tilton's song "I Want to Get Married," and the performance of Larry Adler, which was without a doubt the finest harmonica playing ever heard in that province.

* * * *

JULY was another warm month; stuffy on occasions and sometimes rainy, too. It was a month full of exciting events and memorable occasions. By now the war criminals were housed in Nuernberg under the watchful guarding of the 1st Infantry Division. Further north, in the city of Berlin, the United States was beginning occupation of its zone of that once-beautiful city. And the first peaceful Fourth of July on the continent was being celebrated

INGOLSTADT C.P. BUILDING

by American troops in Germany. The events of that day are described in an excerpt from the *NINTH DIVISION NEWS:*

> *A salvo of 48 rounds—one for each state in the Union—fired from a battery of 105mm howitzers ranged side by side in the lot opposite Division headquarters at Ingolstadt thundered at noon on Wednesday as a platoon of infantrymen from the 60th "Go-Devil" Regiment facing the wind-whipped national and Division colors stood rigidly at attention.*

The *NINTH DIVISION NEWS* was reborn on June 13, 1945, in its first volume printed overseas. Chief Warrant Officer Harold T. O'Hara, the prolific historian of the 47th Infantry, was its first editor-in-chief, and he began one of the most successful publishing enterprises ever conducted by the Ninth. The *NEWS*, coupled with *The Stars and Stripes* and Radio Station *AFN*, served to enliven an otherwise humdrum existence. At this time there were few clubs for the enlisted men; and for the most part, Red Cross doughnuts and coffee still were being distributed from the grey and battered *Clubmobiles*—those 6-by-6 trucks which were converted into traveling snack bars. Aboard these wagons, the Red Cross girls used to ply the Division circuit, dispensing their products to hungry mouths and thirsty throats.

Beer was being produced now, and in one area a temporary shortage of water or coffee forced a lieutenant to feed his P.W. crew of workers brew with their *C* Rations! But beer was not yet in sufficient abundance for GI Clubs to begin, and the only hope at that time of a place to hang one's hat outside of the kaserne or the converted German house which then was home was to obtain a Red Cross Club.

It was a happy day, therefore, when the Hotel Adler in Ingolstadt opened in mid-July as a Division ARC Club, complete with doughnuts, coffee, writing rooms and the hottest Hungarian band this side of Budapest. From far and near men flocked to enjoy their club—which was just down the street from the Cafe Baren, the officers' club.

Meanwhile, other clubs—ARC and beer—opened throughout the zone of the Ninth. If fraternization was not to be allowed, at least there would be some place to spend an evening when the current movie had been seen and the USO troupes were playing in another area.

Just as the Hotel Adler was opening, hundreds of high-point veterans of the Ninth—both officers and men—were transferred to such outfits as the 65th Infantry and the 10th and 14th Armored Divisions. In turn, many low-point personnel from those divisions joined the Ninth. As the old-timers left, they passed on a little of their spirit to those who remained behind.

They were not forgotten, and neither did they forget the Division. Early in June plans had been completed for formation of a Ninth Division Association. By this time the idea had become an accomplished fact, with some six thousand paid-up members enrolled. Not only had this association been formed to give companionships a chance to endure, but the by-laws and constitution stated that a history of their Division would be published, so that for all time the magnificent record which they had helped make would be there for themselves and the world to see.

* * * *

A new swimming pool will be opened at Camp Dachau for use of the members of the First battalion, 47th Infantry. The pool formerly was used by the SS troopers who now are cleaning it up for the GIs.
—*NINTH DIVISION NEWS*

AS JULY wore on, 5,000 former *S.S.* troops were returned to Dachau Concentration Camp, this time as prisoners of the 47th's 1st Battalion. In this paradoxical situation, the men who once had been part and parcel of a cruel system of tortures were most fearful of the results which might accompany their stay. Camp Dachau had changed hands, however, and the cruelties had ended.

But the ghastly kilns were there yet, and the urns of Dachau held ashes of many Catholic and Protestant clergymen (3,000 or more)—who dared intimate that Hitler was not God! This camp had been the cruelest of them all, and dismal, hilly Dachau with its blood-stained camp was a blot upon the human race. Some of the former inmates who miraculously had escaped were near at hand. Their tales were enough to make the blood of even the hardiest battle veteran turn cold.

RED CROSS CLUB . . . HOTEL ADLER

In addition to the review by the Army commander, many events were scheduled; and all troops not needed on guard and other essential duties were allowed to participate in the Ninth's own day. Whereas the scheduled Bob Hope show was unable to participate in the ceremonies (because bad weather had delayed their flying from Berlin), the Ninth was treated to another USO troupe, the Wrenn Girls' Orchestra. In addition there was an exhibition by heavyweight boxing title-contender Billy Conn, and such sports events as hard and soft baseball games, top-notch golfing exhibitions, horseshoe pitching, table tennis and tennis exhibitions, and there was an airing over station *AFN* of the Division's long and exciting history.

July of 1945 ended in a hustle and bustle. General Patton was scheduled to review the Ninth Division at Manching airfield during August 1st, for it was the Ninth's fifth anniversary . . . five years of reactivation. The last time the General had seen the entire Division was in Sicily, when he had commanded the Seventh Army. But that colorful battle commander scarcely would recognize a face on August 1, 1945—for the composition of the Division had changed greatly since that memorable October day of 1943.

General Patton's review came off on schedule and it was made more memorable by the occasion. Ingolstadt was agog with celebration, and the Hotel Adler did a rushing doughnut business. Throughout the area were many local talent groups that day

> On the fifth anniversary of the Ninth Division there will probably be no more than a handful, if any, left of the men who departed from Fort Bragg nearly three years ago. Many of these veterans lie in cemeteries, or in unmarked graves, from the coasts of Africa to the hills of Bavaria. Many others have earned discharge. All of them have written a page in history which will be imperishable.
>
> —Major General Donald A. Stroh

which had been recruited by Special Service, and all in all, August 1st was well enjoyed . . . and in peace for once.

The Bob Hope show arrived finally. Once again bad weather delayed flying and a rush motor cavalcade was formed to bring the unit to Ingolstadt. After skipping their supper in Berchtesgaden, the troupe hurried by car to arrive in Ingolstadt stadium at 7:15 P.M., where a crowd of men had filled the brim of that field. Taking only two minutes to change, the stars went right on—for their one-night stand.

With Hope were be-moustached funnyman Jerry Colonna, singer Jack Pepper, gagster Roger Price, beauteous film actress and singer Gale Robbins, blonde pianist Jean Bruner, tiny accordionist Ruth Denas and tap-dancer Patty Thomas, whose illness prevented her appearance. The show was a great success and after it was over the famished troupe went over to the Rear Echelon officers' mess to have the meal of the day: baloney, cheese, cucumbers, soup, beer, coffee and chunks of G.I. canned pineapple.

Other acts were to come as time went on. Paul Robeson, Miriam Solovieff, Staff Sergeant Eugene List and lesser lights played in the *Notorious* Theater at Ingolstadt. But the biggest acts played the so-called gravy circuit. Jack Benny, Bob Hope, the *Diamond Horseshoe* extravaganza and the *Rockettes* were big-name shows and were scheduled only for places where huge crowds could gather—in an effort to get the most of their short stays in the ET. Soldiers traveled great distances to see those headliners, but for unknown units without stars it was just the opposite. Those troupes were required to demonstrate their ability in outlying districts and before Army units as small as companies.

As mentioned previously, just after the war, when

GENERALS PATTON, LADD AND McBRIDE

FIFTH ANNIVERSARY REVIEW

motion picture machines were battle casualties, *live shows* fetched capacity houses. The average occupation soldier wanted to see American girls, to hear swing music and to forget. To satisfy the overwhelming demand for stage shows, European Theater Special Service obtained continental talent. One of the most memorable of the European units (for the Ninth Division, at least) was a French troupe—*S'il Vous Plait*. The unit had six women, an almost-American style swing band, a couple of comedians and a bottomless supply of smiles.

Whether planned or not, something embarrassing kept happening to one of the girl dancers . . . Sabian was the name. She was wearing a rather flimsy outfit in the first place. Above all, her slim figure was unusual for a French mademoiselle. While whirling through her Moroccan number, Sabian emerged (several times) minus the upper portion of her two-piece costume. Since that bra was the extent of the young lady's clothing above the waist, a great commotion ensued after each unveiling.

Sabian, of the French theater, was in no hurry to replace her lost covering. The assembled spectators reacted as would, perhaps, patrons of *Minsky's* on a busy Saturday night, and whistling and clapping resounded. GIs took it all as part of the show; Sabian never blushed, seemed to like the applause. But . . . over in a corner (red as a beet) stood the Special Service Officer . . . wondering how this all got by the Army censors!

BY AUGUST 5th the Japs were fearful of invasion. On every front they were being pushed back and their battered fleet had become a poor second to that of the Allies. Then on August 6th the first atomic bomb in all history fell on the enemy. Three days later another such devastating bombload of death was hurled to the earth, while all the world blinked its eyes at the news that America had solved the complex problem of harnessing the atom. Japan was worried, particularly the leaders of that emperor-worshipping island nation. The Red Army invaded Manchuria on August 10th. On the following day, having succumbed to the persuasion of the atom bomb and finding that continuation of the war was hopeless, the Japs offered to surrender if their emperor would be allowed to stay on his throne. On August 12th the *Big Four* agreed to let Hirohito keep his crown, but only if an Allied commander governed through him.

August 15th was the end of the war and it was not just *V-J* Day, but the long-awaited *V-Day*. President Truman had announced the total surrender of Japan and it was all over! There was joy in the area of the Ninth Division. Combat veterans knew that this meant much more than a celebration—it was a chance for many thousands of other fighting men to return home after having fought a hard and costly war.

V-J day was scheduled for observance Friday, Aug. 16, by the Ninth Infantry Division. A holiday *was declared for that day in honor of the proclaimed Japanese acceptance of the Allies' Potsdam declaration . . . Meanwhile, Ninth Division GIs began sweating the points system again.*

—*NINTH DIVISION NEWS*

With the end of the war came statistics, and they were startling. *Army Times* reported:

That the 3rd, 4th, 9th, 36th and 45th Infantry Divisions suffered the most casualties in the war against Germany was the statement of Robert P. Patterson, Acting Secretary of War, at a recent press and radio conference.

In looking over the casualty lists of the Ninth Infantry Division, it was discovered that the Ninth had suffered the fourth highest amount of casualties in the entire United States Army. The recorded statements listed for the Ninth at that time: 4,581 men killed in action, 16,961 wounded and 750 Ninthmen missing in action. Moreover, the Ninth had the second lowest number of men missing in action of the seven leading casualty units, and that was indicative of a spirit of not giving up. In the ETO, the Division had been third in the number of battle losses.

When all the five airborne divisions of the U.S. Army combined their casualties, they had only 2,000 more than the Ninth Division. All twenty of the Army's armored divisions combined suffered only three times as many losses as the Ninth. This was the tremendous price of freedom which had been paid by the men of the *Octofoil*, and it was with deep feeling that these figures were inscribed in the records of the Division—to be remembered with solemn pride.

* * * *

TOURS were well organized in September and included journeys to such places as Switzerland, the Riviera, Paris, Rome and the Division rest center at Kochel See. The Ninth started a football team under the direction of Andy Kerr, Jr., son of a famous coach, and the regiments and Divarty organized their teams as well. Points for discharge were under continual discussion and the occupation became more stable now, with ARC clubs springing up everywhere and PX rations coming in more frequently—even though they were off-brand cigarettes and hard candy.

Mid-September found the headquarters and most of Special Troops of the Ninth moving to Wasserburg-am-Inn and Camp Gabersee—the latter a former insane asylum and more recently the headquarters of Herman Goering. At Camp Gabersee, the rigors of garrison life again began to plague the men of the headquarters. Down the hill, however, where the town of Wasserburg jutted out to form a bend in the Inn River, there were the ARC Town Club and the officers' club, both boasting refreshments and entertainment. There was a regular 35mm movie theater in the town, and all ranks had their clubs . . . even the privates, who had a club in Camp Gabersee.

With the displacement of the Division headquarters came other moves. The end of September found the 60th Infantry occupying the former headquarters of the Ninth at Ingolstadt; 47th Infantry headquarters troops were stationed at Dachau; Divarty was at Toging, while the 39th, for the moment, remained at Aichach.

As the Ninth Division and Special Troop units became accustomed to their new home at Gabersee, the remainder of the Ninth looked around to find that it was occupying a much larger zone. With the 14th Armored Division and the 45th Division having gone home, the area of the Ninth reached from just to the north of Berchtesgaden and Salzburg, north around Munich and way across the Danube to the north of Ingolstadt. This was the real occupation; and as luck would have it, with the decrease of personnel in the American zone of occupation, duties increased.

As September ended, the mobile libraries—*Bookmobiles*—were making their rounds, the weather was losing its summery tinge, the *Autobahns* were the scenes of increasing numbers of accidents, M.P.'s were becoming more strict, and very frequently men of the Ninth passed through the battered city of Munich—which was the shortest route between regiments and Division. By October 2nd, the 39th Infantry Regiment had moved to the quaint and undamaged town of Rosenheim at the foot of the Bavarian Alps, and the Ninth got more or less set for the winter.

For the next three months, the shortage of manpower for the task at hand became more apparent. Not only was the Ninth engaged in guarding installations and keeping charge of various prisoner cages throughout its enlarged zone, but the administration of 18 landkreise (corresponding roughly to American counties) took a great deal of time and personnel. Timeless and endless, it seemed, there were such monotonous tasks as roving check posts, security patrols, riot squads and normal guarding. As the last quarter of the year ticked off the calendar, each regiment received a *chance* to train at the Hohenfels Combat Firing Range, a former German training camp to the north of Regensburg. This series of combat maneuvers was part of the Division scheme to keep at least one regiment in combat training and condition at all times in case of emergency. Qualifying on the 100-target rifle range at Manching (which had been built by the 15th Engineers) was underway concurrent with the war games at Hohenfels.

But the job of the Ninth was becoming increasingly hard. Redeployment of troops sapped the Division of its experienced personnel and replacements always seemed to be less than the losses. In the midst of its other problems, the Ninth carried on an extensive survey to locate proper accommodations for dependents when the final boundaries of the Ninth were reached.

Things were not all gloomy, however, for there were evenings off and no sustained shooting. Finally, of all things, a platoon of WACs joined the Ninth Division around October 12th!

As eyes popped out of GI sockets, twenty-eight American girls, all members of the Women's Army Corps, discovered Camp Gabersee on Columbus Day. Assigned as members of the Second Platoon, First Wac Special Service Company, they are the first members of their organization ever attached to the Ninth Infantry Division.

—NINTH DIVISION NEWS

By the time Wacs joined the Ninth, the ban on fraternization had been lifted, and currency control was in existence. Fog and rain covered the roads to Division headquarters and the gasoline shortage became more acute. Food was a little better now, mostly because of the stable setup of the Division, which aided the mess hall personnel.

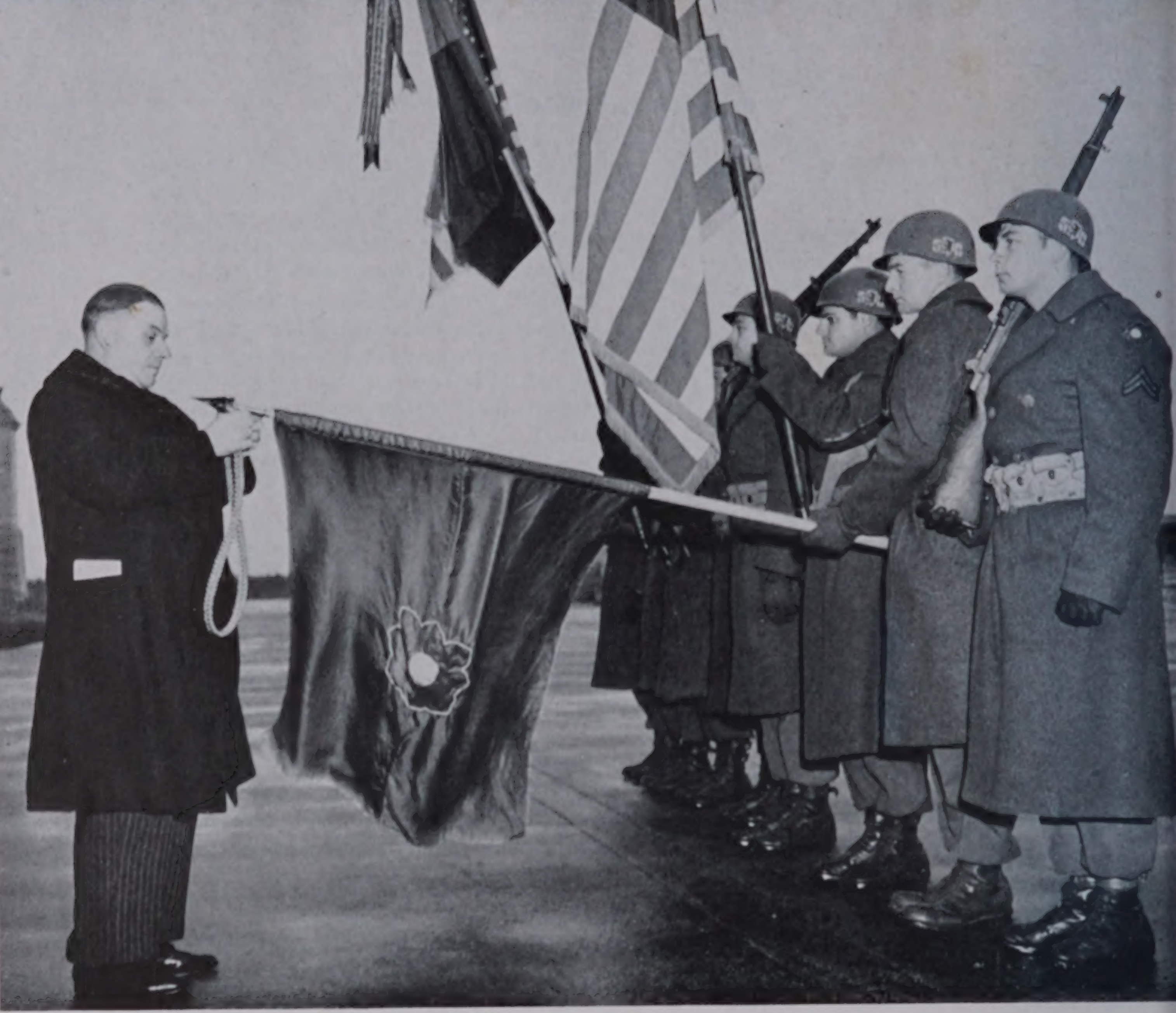
Snow fell during the early part of November and many of those who remembered the wicked winter of 1944 in the Roer and *Siegfried* regions were mighty happy to be where they were. But this coming of winter brought added tortures for the drivers of the rickety vehicles of the Ninth, many of which jeeps and trucks should have been exchanged long ago for new ones.

Announcement was made at this time that there would be approximately 1,000 cases of liquors and wine and about 60 kegs of wine distributed free to all members of the Ninth during the holiday season. This was captured enemy stock and it was to be distributed for the three holidays of Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years. Simultaneous with this stimulating news came announcement on November 21st that the Ninth had been given control of the Berchtesgaden Landkreis, bringing the total under its jurisdiction to 19. This additional area was given to the 39th Infantry, and *AAA-O* troops moved into the Jaeger Kaserne . . . to take up Regular Army post life.

* * * *

Recreation, so vital to the well rounded training program, was not neglected. Unit football teams were formed and a few weeks later a series of Saturday football games reminiscent of those at home were held for the enjoyment of all troops. Within the Division, the four major units played a round robin series which was climaxed on Thanksgiving Day with the 39th Infantry winning the Divisional Championship. Preparations were made for a winter sports program, with each unit sending the best qualified men to attend the ski instructors school at Garmisch, scene of the 1936 Olympics. Augmenting this outdoor sports program, plans for indoor recreation were made by the special service branch. They included inter-unit basketball games, table tennis tournaments, bowling and boxing matches.

—Ninth Division Report of Operations



M. MUNGALEER CITES NINTH INFANTRY DIVISION

THANKSGIVING of 1945 was a grand day. The food was tasty and the turkeys arrived on time. In some mess halls, the fineness of the meal was a direct tribute to the cooks and mess officers who saved a little from previous meals to insure that for one day, at least, everyone would leave the table stuffed to the *gills*.

But Thanksgiving was not the same as it had been in the States. Somehow the families and friends seemed to be missing for those who had stayed away for too many years. Newer soldiers found this holiday a novelty, perhaps, but to veterans of several years in the European Theater, this day was a little hollow. However, it was infinitely better than the corresponding period of 1944!

Three days after the big feast of the year, Belgians gave thanks to the Ninth for their country's freedom. As the sun tried to break through threatening snow clouds, representatives of the Ninth and 1st Infantry Divisions, assembled at Soldier's Field in Nuernberg to receive the Belgian Fourragere from the Belgian Minister of National Defense, M. Leon Mungaleer. This was the fourragere with two citations, awarded to each member of the *Varsity* who was assigned to the Division and its attached units during the periods for which both citations were awarded. In particular, the Minister expressed the appreciation of his people for the part the two famous divisions played in the liberation of country "which will live in our hearts forever." The fourragere cord thus became a permanent part of the uniform of members of the Ninth on active duty, and of all former members entitled to it.

* * * *

WITH the approach of King Winter, the beauties of the Bavarian and Tirolean snowlands became more apparent. Snow sports, photo snapping and the ancient towns of the area gave promise that the coming months would be more pleasant than supposed previously. And they were. In the Bavarian Alps south of Munich lies one of the world's best known playgrounds. For countless years the mountainous, jagged lake-dotted terrain comprising Bavaria's Tirol has been exploited in travel posters and in magazines.

In December of 1945, the land which boasted of Oberammergau, Bad Wiesse, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Bad Toelz, Tuetzing and Starnberg was full of winter rest camps for men of the XX Corps. In addition, the Ninth's own rest camp at Kochel See afforded the best in skiing, bobsledding and ice-skating. Nestled amid scenic alpine crests, this winter wonderland was a GI paradise. Everything was free for the asking, including transportation, food, service, quarters, sporting equipment and the former stamping ground of millionaires. Facilities at Kochel were boasted by ski enthusiasts as being better than those of the famed Zugsptize.

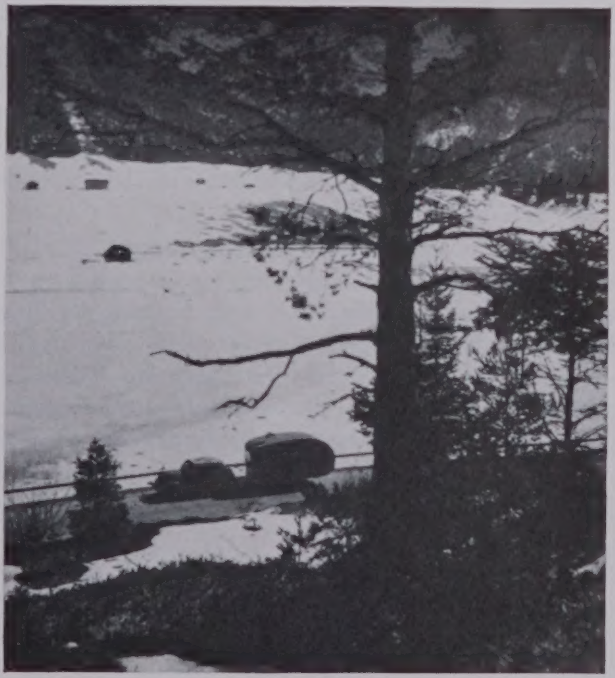
Berchtesgaden, former Hitler retreat, was now within Divisional boundaries. And here, where thousands of inquisitive sightseers came hundreds of miles to view from the *Fuehrer's Window,* or scale the heights to the breath-taking *Eagle's Nest,* men of the Ninth Division held sway.

In the lake regions to the south, rare combinations of snow and morning frosts produced a silvery painted effect upon the hilly landscapes; trees seemed unreal, churches appeared as they do on Christmas cards. Rolling hills—still covered with first snows—blended into sparkling, iced waters. What had drawn visitors from the four corners of the earth was at the Ninth's doorstep.

In this strange land of paradox, Hitler obtained a majority of his *Waffen* (Volunteer) *S.S.*, and yet here was found the timeless reenactment of *The Passion Play* at Oberammergau. At this town, too, big-handed woodchoppers carved exquisite figures, mostly those of angels. Women wore old-fashioned costumes, and the man who played the part of Christ in the passion play was discovered to be a Nazi!

This was, without a doubt, the area of some of nature's finer handiwork. And perhaps that was the brighter side of the occupation; for the onion-topped steeples and rock-weighted roofs of the fairytale hamlets and wayside inns created the illusion of a pleasant dream come true. Many men of the Ninth felt thankful that they had been stationed in this wonderland of lakes, mountains and picturesque vil-

A WINTER WONDERLAND



lages, and not in the destroyed urban areas to the north.

Perhaps, that was one of the reasons why the Ninth Division was leading the entire Third Army in recruiting as the year ended. At that time the Ninth had ended the quarter with 1,280 reenlistments, with the 39th Infantry being first in the Ninth with 367 recruits.

* * * *

CHRISTMAS DAY of 1945 was a real storybook holiday. For the most part, the snow was piled high upon the hills and the churches were full. Soldiers in the Ninth and its attached units received their bundles from home on time and for the first time overseas, troops were allowed to send unrestricted Xmas telegrams.

As the year ended, the changes which had overtaken the Ninth were glaringly evident. Only a few men and officers of the more than fifty thousand who had passed through the Division ranks up to May of 1945 were now with the Ninth Division. The former enemy was being treated with courtesy; fraternization was legal and German frauleins were invited to many dances. The reconstruction of the damage wrought by war was commencing slowly, and those who once had advocated killing every last German were finding that they had lost their vehement ideas. As the bells told the world that 1946 had arrived, a few veterans took off minutes from their parties and gaieties to think (as did many former comrades now in the States) of 1945 and the 365 days that shook the world.

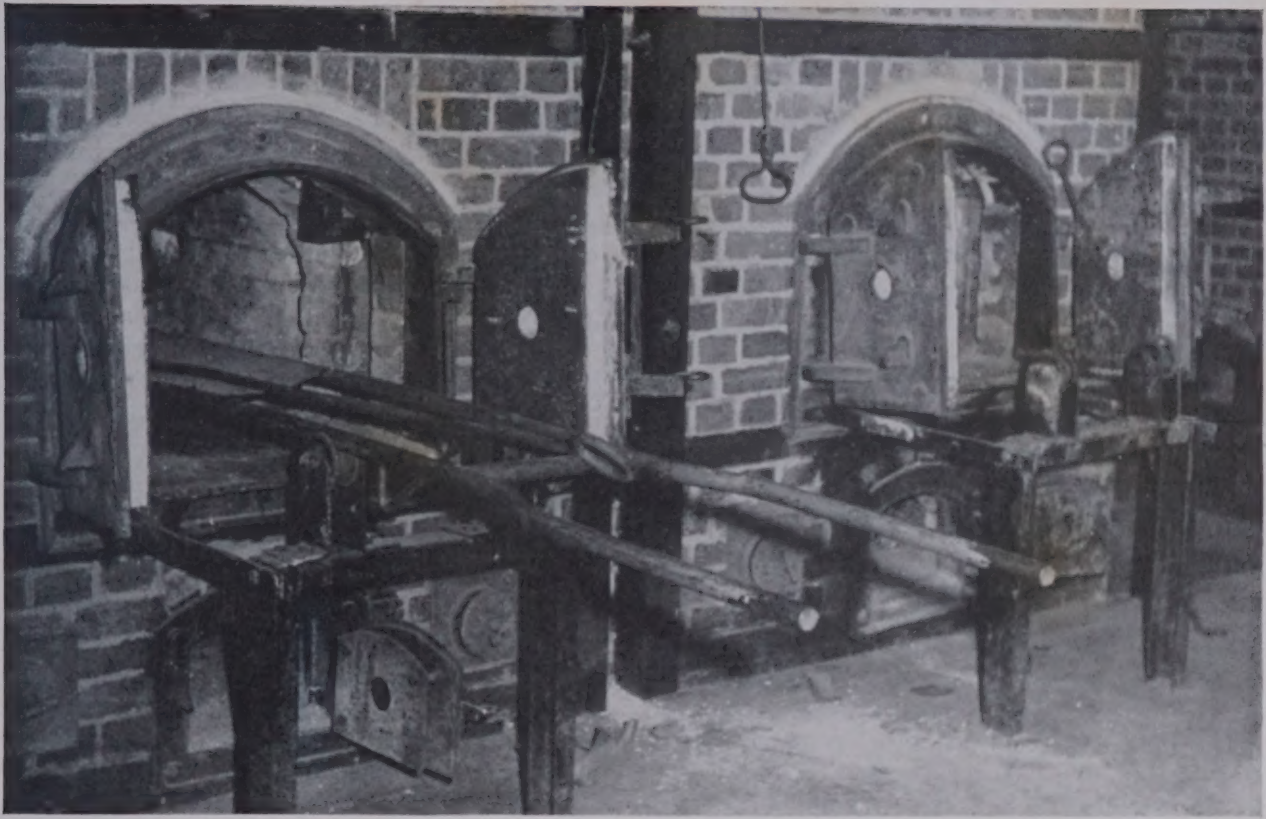
The birth of another January brought even further changes in the occupation picture. Before the month was very old, the American high command announced the formation of a constabulary to take over the duties of occupation beginning in July of 1946. The steady process of redeployment continued and in order to aid the Division in policing properly its immense area, civilian police and the blue-uniformed Polish guard companies were employed increasingly.

It was at this time, too, that *APO 9* announced that the current system of APO numbers was being modernized by USFET in order to speed up the service. Everyone within the Ninth's zone was to use *APO 9*, as the central system of numbers was adopted. In January, as well, the longtime dream of many soldiers to phone home from Munich was realized as Munich-U.S. phone calls became a reality in the Munich ARC Club, the very beer hall where Hitler had staged his fiasco revolution of 1923!

Sporting events took the spotlight as winter wore on. There were reports that the *Go-Devils* had a strong basketball quintette, and these rumors proved true, for the 60th five was leading the inter-regimental basketball league. They embarked shortly on an 8-day road trip which took them to play four games, two of which were in Austria. In the hockey line, the Ninth received sufficient equipment from Third Army supply depot to outfit two teams, and it was in this particular sport that the Division was to outshine greatly all competition. Divarty opened an ice rink at Toging, meanwhile, and the Ninth Division basketball team avenged an earlier loss by defeating the 38th AAA Brigade Team from Munich by a score of 58-32 at the Fort Jones Sports Arena in Ingolstadt. To round out the already busy lives of the sports fans, the Third Army tournaments for boxing and ping-pong were in preparation.

There were official changes in command and moving which came about from time to time during the early months of 1946. The biggest changes came in February. First of all, Brigadier General Jesse A. Ladd, the patient and good-natured commanding general of the Ninth, relinquished charge of the Division he had commanded during the previous nine months and headed for the States. Brigadier General Reese M. Howell, veteran Divarty chief, assumed temporary command. Almost simultaneously, the ever-smiling Colonel William C. Westmoreland, one of the last old-timers left with the Division, gave up command of the 60th Infantry Regiment and joined the 71st Division to help pilot it home.

More of the high-point men and officers still with the Division joined that 71st contingent, and as the 71st prepared to leave the ET, more changes took place. The XX Corps was dissolved, and on February 4th the Ninth Division took over (officially) the 25 Landkreise of the former 71st Infantry Division area, bringing the Ninth's total to 44. In addition,



DACHAU'S GHASTLY KILNS REMINDED OF THE PAST

the three infantry regiments of the 71st Division—the 5th, 14th and 66th—were attached to the Ninth at this time.

During February 15th, with the 71st Division redeployment in the shipping stage, headquarters of the Ninth moved into the former 71st headquarters city of Augsburg. This marked the first occasion that the Ninth Infantry Division had obtained a large city for a headquarters in all the years of its existence . . . the days of traveling through the back alleys of Europe were over.

Augsburg proved to be the best area of them all in regard to transportation and modern facilities. The various former enemy installations and posts (kasernes) of the city were utilized, and these included two excellent and adjacent areas on the outskirts of town. Although Augsburg had been bombed somewhat, the trolley systems were operative and the 71st Division turned over, intact, an unsurpassed array of enlisted and officer clubs, first-class motion picture theaters, living quarters, sign posts and a modern and well equipped printing plant for the *NINTH DIVISION NEWS,* which shortly became the finest newspaper of its kind published by the Army in Europe.

But with the ARC Clubs and the comfort and the cleanliness of their new surroundings, the average GIs found that they had run into a permanent post setup, one which called for standing *reveille,* occasional retreat parades and checking in at M.P. gates.

Simultaneous with the change of surroundings came another change of command. Major General Horace L. McBride, hard-hitting former commanding general of the 80th Infantry Division, and more recently in charge of XX Corps, assumed command of the Ninth. In the choice of its last commander overseas, the Ninth was as fortunate as it had been previously. Tall, athletic General McBride was a real soldier and the type of person men did not mind following. As the new CG took over, he told the men of the Ninth of their new role in the occupation, and he brought with him his friend and chief of staff, Colonel Edward H. Metzger, who had risen through the ranks from private to Regular Army colonel. The new chief of staff replaced Colonel Hulley, who in turn became commanding officer of the 60th Infantry Regiment.

* * * *

THE occupation was getting more like stateside garrison life now. During early February a new soda fountain was opened in Ingolstadt by Second Lieutenant Thomas Olthoff, the 60th's PX officer. Across the Danube River at Fort Jones, a miracle of education was under way. What had started out to be a battalion I. & E. (Information and Education) School had become *Nutmeg Prep*, the Division's command school. It was largely the work of Dean (Lt.) Morton J. Stussman, the fast-moving, fast-talking procurer of the 60th Infantry, who had taken a dilapidated old fort complete with dungeons and had made it into a university. The dungeons were refitted into dormitories; a night club had been constructed in one of the long storage rooms which would have put to shame many in New York City; a sports arena had been constructed; mess halls were in full operation; and the most amazing part was that mechanical, commercial, academic and practical training equipment had been secured from almost nowhere by this hard-working officer to found the institution.

Bombed buildings were repaired and converted into school rooms; musicians were hired to serenade the students at meal time and study halls were fashioned out of the rubble and destruction of a war-torn area. Dean Stussman, the thin combat veteran who had proved that education was worthy of hard labor, brought the men of the Ninth an opportunity to grasp knowledge on a high scale while on occupation duty.

With the approach of spring came other happenings. Eleven thousand German prisoners, fresh from Italy began to be moved into the zone of the Ninth in 1,000-men shipments. Forty-five day leaves to the States opened up for a lucky few and the Ninth Division won the Third Army hockey championship. So many new men had arrived into the Division, that it was necessary to publish two small books overseas, informing the newcomers of the record possessed by the Division they had joined . . . *The Final Thrust* and *Hold Fast!*

Yes, the personnel of the Division seemed to alter

OCCUPATION WAS GARRISON-LIKE NOW

daily, and it became ever more the task of the newspapers of the Division, the *NINTH DIVISION NEWS, AAA-O NEWS, The Raider, The Go-Devil* and the Divarty *Scholar,* plus such *Old Reliables* as were left to acquaint the new men of the *Octofoil* with their Division.

Everything seemed to have become transformed now; even the gay cities of France and Belgium. This was the first dreadful winter after the war and there were no extra supplies of food and fuel for the impoverished liberated peoples of Europe . . . barely enough, in fact, for mere existence. Most of all, Paris had changed, as was reported by the author in the *NINTH DIVISION NEWS*:

> The *Gay Paree* we knew during the war has marched into the past. In its place is a cold, matter-of-fact city--fighting to survive the twin threats of starvation and inflation. Snow and slush add to the misery of once festive Parisian life.
>
> To those of us who finagled a *Paris Pass* during the war, a wonderland seemed to rise upon the horizon. Things we had heard about all our lives—the mesdemoiselles, Eifel Tower, famed Montmartre and unforgettable Pig Alle—became a reality. Women pulled at our arms on the crowded streets. Cognac and Calvados flowed like the troubled waters of the Seine. Gendarmes, with their continental half-capes and long night-sticks true to movie form, saluted when we asked a direction.
>
> Coffee, doughnuts and cokes could be had at a dozen Red Cross Clubs. Most famous of these was over-patronized *Rainbow Corner.* If you wanted to meet an old buddy, here was the place. Here, too, was information, a hot shower, and a chance to dance with pretty French hostesses.
>
> Down the line, at palatial *Grand Hotel,* GIs enjoyed rest, excellent food, dancing—and an almost civilian feeling. This was the *Allied Club*—run primarily for groups of infantrymen on reprieve from combat. Battle-weary doughs were served in the golden splendor of a dining hall which unashamed could seat a king.
>
> Those were days of entertainment, too. Allied movies, stage shows, and the unusual *Folies Bergere* drew thousands of eager patrons. Soldiers were pleasure-starved—and became pleasure-fed. Everything was for the GI—and the GI was for everything.
>
> You wouldn't have believed that so many combinations could have been conjured from the small issue of clothing the men on pass had. Every soldier was his own uniform designer. Top hats, beaver-skin hats, multi-colored scarves, fancy jackets and combat sweaters became ingredients for the Parisian hodgepodge of mufti.
>
> Today that is no more. Beautiful Champs-Elysses is a mass of muddy snow and iced water. Whistling cold winds almost blow out the eternal fire under symbolic Arc D'Triomphe. One scarcely notices a uniform . . . is even surprised by the lack of Army vehicles jockeying in the crazy French traffic.
>
> Yes, the Eifel Tower is still there . . . the rivers are their picturesque selves, Place de la Concorde is as historic as ever, and the Metro continues to run on time. Yet gone is that atmosphere of freedom and ease which once spread over the surging carnival of humanity. Where street-walkers once trod the concrete after a thousand dishonest francs (or a carton of smokes), today are men trying to buy something . . . anything.
>
> The doughnut circuit is closing down. A few Red Cross Clubs are left but they are *few* and far-between. Old buddies seldom turn up. There are no visible signs of a once vast army of M.P.'s. One feels as if he *is* in a foreign country!
>
> At gaudy *Casino de Paris,* freezing girls miss their departed fans in OD—for the theater houses are half-empty. Most shows have lost some of their former GI-appeal. All have lost most of their GI trade.
>
> The Anglo-American hordes of occupation have left, and Paris is at peace. It is a Paris rising out of the chains of bondage . . . it is a city of hunger and regret.
>
> But, the tales of gaiety and naughtiness, and of "the most beautiful city in the world" still will be told. They were the yarns of our fathers and uncles . . . and probably will be ours, too. For Paris is eternal . . . it is a fairy tale come true. And, as such it cannot die!

* * * *

ONCE again, spring was at hand. The weather was improving, and on the farms bounding the *Autobahns* unsmiling farmers tended their fields. Most of the American-occupied Germany was covered by the Ninth and 1st Infantry Divisions now, and the Constabulary was in training for the day when it would take over the job of policing and leave the combat units free for training and emergency employment.

On April 1, 1946, the Ninth Infantry Division covered the amazing area of 15,826 square miles and over 75 counties, which included the provinces of Wurttemberg-Baden, Schwaben and Oberbayern. The Ninth Division artillery (Colonel George R. Scither) covered a 216-square-mile area, with its headquarters in Munich; Colonel Van H. Bond's 39th Infantry encompassed the southeastern section of some 3,600 square miles with its headquarters in Rosenheim; the southwestern region was under the jurisdiction of Colonel Peter O. Ward's 47th Infantry, which ruled a 3,589-square-mile domain from the town of Kaufbeuren; and the 60th Infantry (Colonel Hulley) had charge of the north-central portion of 2,820 square miles with headquarters in Ingolstadt. In addition, the attached 31st AAA Brigade (Colonel Frank Camm) covered a 5,800-square-mile area with headquarters in Esslingen.

That was a lot of territory, and with the increase in responsibility came other occupational duties to eat up more manpower hours. There were repatriations, screening and releasing prisoners of war, and destruction of former enemy war material—as well as repatriating art treasures to Czechoslovakia.

Duties galore came the way of the Division. The Ninth was responsible for rationing and guarding tens of thousands of displaced persons . . . for guarding interned civilians, hospitals, former *S.S.* men and war criminals. For many units the occupation was an almost overpowering job—taking every available second of time and asking for more. In addition, the rapid rate of demobilization was enough to cause grey hair among those in charge of these tasks. As always, the Ninth managed to scrape through and come out with flying colors.

In May a reward came for the officers and non-coms who had waited so long, as dependents began arriving for the military communities of the Ninth's zone.

June 6th was the second anniversary of *D-Day* and the men who made possible that memorable landing scarcely would have recognized the U.S. Army on the continent. American civilian personnel were everywhere; the private jeeps and automobiles of both Army and civilian drivers banged on along the roads, and military life seemed well ordered. Two years previously it had been a bitter fight to the death, now there were German youth organizations, designed to re-educate the former *Hitler's Children*.

The months went by quickly in 1946. July 4th, sunny and glorious passed with celebration and a holiday from work. Then came August 1st and a three-day holiday began for the men of the Ninth,

DEMOBILIZATION WAS A PROBLEM

AUGUST 1, 1946

in what proved to be the last reactivation anniversary festivities of the Ninth Infantry Division overseas.

The very few officers and men left who had served in combat with the Ninth paused to think of the past at this time. The *Old Reliables* were six years old as an outfit, but they had lived a lifetime once over. Eulogies were sent in by various high-ranking generals and former commanders, and *AFN* again broadcast the story of the Ninth. Perhaps, however, the most challenging statement of the day came from General McBride, the Division commander who said in reference to the past members of the Ninth: ". . . They will not be forgotten."

* * * *

BY AUGUST 1946, most units occupied excellent military posts. The 39th Infantry Regiment was headquartered at Bad Toelz, and the huge kaserne atop the hill had been renamed Flint Barracks—in honor of the former *AAA-O* commander. Military communities had been set up in logical areas and the whole life of the Ninth Division appeared to be one of moving, setting up and then moving again.

Deactivation of many of the Division's units began at this time, and soon after the Ninth's sixth anniversary it was disclosed that the Ninth Infantry Division, as such, would be deactivated sometime after the first of the new year. Then the months of occupation rolled by quickly again. The Ninth Division Special Troops Battalion won the European Theater football championship, and more families arrived from the States. Soon it was December and Christmastime. This was the last one for the Ninth and Christmas saw published the final edition of the *NINTH DIVISION NEWS,* which received a special Honorable Discharge from General McBride.

The last quarter of 1946 witnessed the piecemeal deactivation of Ninth Division units . . . a battalion here, a battalion there. Without formality or ceremony the various outfits which had composed the wartime Ninth were closed down, and their personnel were transferred out to other units—the 1st Division, the Constabulary and the Military Community of Augsburg.

Then came the new year of 1947 and the sad moment. In the almost empty Division headquarters buildings on January 15, 1947, a solemn and business-like handful of officers and men prepared to pack and move away. There was no fanfare, no massed bands to retire the Division's battle-honored colors—only the fleeting glimpse of a Ninth Division *Octofoil* evidenced the fact that one of the most colorful divisions of all time once had made its home here.

It seemed as if there was no one left to muster, except *APO 9,* which remained open for sixty days to forward mail. Nothing was left but these GI mailmen and the ghosts of the men who had made the Division great . . . *Paddy* Flint . . . James Johnston . . . Woodrow Wilson Bailey . . . John Butts . . . Carl V. Sheridan . . . and almost five thousand more departed comrades.

Now the doors to the headquarters buildings shut as the disintegration became complete. The hollow emptiness of the kaserne soon would be filled by another occupying force. Without feeling, as if blown to bits by a bomb, the Ninth had been laid to rest . . . no mourning after its death, just a disintegration and the clicking of doors being locked.

But there were those who remembered. One of these persons was General Devers, who now commanded the Army Ground Forces. As the deactivation time arrived, he sent the Ninth its last letter of appreciation through General McBride, to express the Army's thanks to the Division for a job well done. It was fitting that in the end, as in the beginning, the words of General Devers should be there to speak to the Ninth:

"The 9th Infantry Division, whose regiments achieved their due measure of distinction in World War I, through the skill, enterprise and valor of its officers and men in World War II, added a brilliant chapter to this nation's military history.

"During training from August 1940 to the fall of 1942, the 9th Division contributed ably in the building of our ground armies for the struggle against the axis powers through continuously cadreing new divisions. I view with distinct pleasure my own association with the 9th as its commander at Fort Bragg.

"On two continents the remarkable achievements of this unit during a long tour of combat duty were outstanding factors in the crushing of the Nazi forces of tyranny and aggression, and won for the division's men and leaders the acclaim of a grateful nation.

"Spearheading the invasion of North Africa, and carrying its weighty share in the destruction of Rommel's legions in Tunisia, it blazed a trail from Troina to the straits of Messina to ensure the early conquest of Sicily. In France its units garnered new glory on the battlefields of Normandy, cutting off the Cotentin peninsula, and powering the breakthrough at St. Lo. The first infantry division across the Rhine into Germany, its heroic reduction of the Ruhr pocket hastened the final capitulation of the German armies.

"Through these and similar feats the name of the 9th will remain forever alive. Since V-E Day, on occupation duty in the enemy's conquered homeland, its services have been no less meritorious.

"Now, at the time of the 9th Division's inactivation, it is my proud privilege to commend you and all those whose fortitude, sacrifice and staunch devotion made possible this magnificent record."

That seemed to be the epitaph of the Ninth Infantry Division . . . the end of an outfit which had fought *Eight Stars to Victory*. Yes, that looked like *finis* for the victors of Port Lyautey, Safi, Algiers, Tunisia, Sicily, Cherbourg, the Meuse and all the rest. Gone were the *Old Reliables,* the *AAA-O,* the *Raiders, Divarty* and the *Go-Devils*. For all purposes the tomb had been sealed and only the record remained.

But to many the Ninth was not dead. As long as men who wore the tri-colored *Octofoil* could breathe; as long as there was a Ninth Infantry Division Association; as long as there was a United States Army, the Ninth would never die.

* * * *

A THRONG of more than three thousand spectators watched the impressive ceremonies that day. It was July 15, 1947, at Fort Dix, New Jersey. In the stands were combat veterans of World War II, their wives, children and friends; as well as many patients from nearby Tilton General Hospital. Lined up on the reviewing field were several high-ranking officers who had distinguished themselves in battle. Further down the parade grounds, an infantry division was prepared to enter the scene with the usual fanfare and martial music that accompanies a large military ceremony.

There was something that all these people had in common that July afternoon. They were participating in one of those rare moments of postwar American history—the rebirth of an infantry division which had achieved a fighting record equalled by few others. That this was no ordinary affair quickly was evident, too. When the summer sunshine temporarily left the heavens and bucketfuls of rain soaked the field, nobody left the stands . . . there was something too important going on to their front. After six months of honored rest, the veteran Ninth Infantry Division was being reactivated.

It was worth staying in the rain to see *that* show!

Section XIII photography credits: Pages 378, 399 by 39th Infantry; 385, 387 by 15th Engineers; 388, 392 are Official U.S. Army Signal Corps Photos; 389, 396, 398 by Ninth Division News; 393 by Hans G. Meile; 395 by 60th Infantry.

NINTH INFANTRY DIVISION

Facts and Figures for World War II

(Taken from compilations made at close of the war in Europe)

Campaigns

Algeria-French Morocco
Tunisia
Sicily
Normandy
Northern France
Ardennes
Rhineland
Central Europe

Casualties

Killed	4,581
Wounded	16,961
Missing	750
Total	22,292

Nicknames

Old Reliables
Notorious Ninth
Hitler's Nemesis

P. W.'s captured, approx.	130,000

Awards and Decorations

Congressional Medals of Honor	4
Distinguished Service Crosses	66
Legion of Merit	17
Distinguished Flying Cross	1
Silver Star	1,855
Bronze Star (Heroic)	2,477
Bronze Star (Merit)	3,570
Air Medal	126

Foreign Awards

French

Order of the Legion of Honor	5
Croix de Guerre with Palm	14
Croix de Guerre with Silver Star	5
Croix de Guerre with Vermilion Star	14
Croix de Guerre with Bronze Star	37

British

Distinguished Conduct Medal	5
Military Medal	4

Belgian

Croix de Guerre with Palm	21

Note: Other awards include a Belgian Fourragere (1940), as noted in text, and several French Fourrageres for the various units of the Ninth. Meritorious Unit Plaques have been awarded the Service Company and Medical Detachment, 39th Infantry Regt.; Service Company and Medical Detachment, 47th Infantry Regt.; Service Company, 60th Infantry Regt.; Ninth Signal Company; Ninth Quartermaster Company; Ninth Medical Battalion; Military Police Platoon; 709th Ordnance Company; Service Company, 746th Tank Battalion. Distinguished Unit Citations (Presidential) are quoted throughout the text.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

KNOWN COMMAND AND STAFF *

Commanding Generals

	Assumed Command
Colonel Charles B. Elliott	August 1940
Brig. Gen. Francis W. Honeycutt	September 1940
Brig. Gen. R. E. D. Hoyle	September 1940
Maj. Gen. Jacob L. Devers	November 1940
Maj. Gen. R. E. D. Hoyle	August 1941
Brig. Gen. S. LeRoy Irwin	June 1942
Brig. Gen. Manton S. Eddy	July 1942
Brig. Gen. S. LeRoy Irwin	September 1942
Maj. Gen. Manton S. Eddy	December 1942
Maj. Gen. Louis A. Craig	August 1944
Brig. Gen. Jesse A. Ladd	May 1945
Maj. Gen. Horace J. McBride	February 1946
Deactivated	January 1947
Maj. W. W. Engles (Reactivated)	July 1947

Assistant Division Commanders

Brig. Gen. E. Forrest Harding	August 1940
Brig. Gen. Manton S. Eddy	March 1942
Brig. Gen. Donald A. Stroh	July 1942
Brig. Gen. James E. Wharton	July 1944
Brig. Gen. Kenneth Buchanan	August 1944
Colonel James S. Rodwell	September 1944
Colonel Hammond D. Birks	October 1944
Brig. Gen. Hammond D. Birks	January 1945
Colonel John G. Van Houten	June 1945
Brig. Gen. Robinson E. Duff	August 1946
Col. John G. Van Houten	October 1946

Division Artillery Commanders

Brig. Gen. R. E. D. Hoyle	October 1940
Colonel S. LeRoy Irwin	September 1941
Brig. Gen. Reese M. Howell	June 1943
Colonel Justin W. Stoll	December 1945

Chiefs of Staff

Lt. Colonel Carlos Brewer	August 1940
Colonel Charles B. Elliott	November 1940
Colonel Samuel A. Gibson	January 1942
Colonel George B. Barth	March 1943
Colonel Noah Brinson	July 1944
Colonel John G. Van Houten	August 1944
Colonel William C. Westmoreland	October 1944
Colonel James P. Hulley	June 1945
Colonel Edward Metzger	February 1946

Commanding 39th Infantry

Lt. Colonel William R. Schmidt	March 1941
Colonel Benjamin F. Caffey	April 1942
Colonel J. Trimble Brown	December 1942
Colonel William Ritter	April 1943
Lt. Colonel John J. Toffey, Jr.	July 1943
Colonel Harry A. Flint	July 1943
Colonel Van H. Bond	July 1944

Commanding 47th Infantry

Captain Earl L. Ringler	August 1940
Major Forrest E. Ambrose	August 1940
Colonel Alexander M. Patch, Jr.	September 1940
Lt. Colonel Edwin H. Randle	August 1941
Colonel Samuel A. Gibson	August 1941
Major Arthur Skarry	January 1942
Lt. Colonel A. Donald Cameron	January 1942
Major George E. Martin	February 1942
Colonel Edwin C. Randle	February 1942
Lt. Colonel Wendel T. Chaffin	May 1943
Colonel George W. Smythe	June 1943
Colonel Peter O. Ward	March 1945

Commanding 60th Infantry

Captain Robert C. Andrews	August 1940
Major H. G. Esden	August 1940
Colonel Frank C. Mahin	September 1940
Colonel William H. Wilbur	January 1942
Colonel Frederick J. de Rohan	July 1942
Colonel Jesse L. Gibney	July 1944
Lt. Colonel Donald C. Clayman	October 1944
Colonel John G. Van Houten	October 1944
Colonel William C. Westmoreland	June 1945

Commanding 15th Engineers

Lt. Colonel John G. Schermerhorn	June 1943
Lt. Colonel John Gray	February 1945

Commanding Ninth Medics

Lt. Colonel W. C. Dreibelbies	1941
Lt. Colonel W. Woodruff	1942
Lt. Colonel Abraham S. Kaufman	May 1943
Major J. P. Roller	June 1945

Commanding 746th Tank Battalion

Lt. Colonel G. Hupfer

Commanding 894th Tank Destroyers

Lt. Colonel Charlie P. Eastburn

Commanding 899th Tank Destroyers

Lt. Colonel Maxwell A. Tincher
Major Hoyt Kay Lorance

Commanding 376th AAA (AW)

Lt. Colonel C. O. Burns

---

* Divarty and smaller unit commanders are not shown past December 1945 because of rapid changeover.

Composition

ORGANIC

39th Infantry Regiment
47th Infantry Regiment
60th Infantry Regiment
Ninth Quartermaster Company
Ninth Signal Company
709th Ordnance Light Maintenance Co.

Ninth Reconnaissance Troop (Mecz)
15th Engineer Combat Battalion
Ninth Medical Battalion
Military Police Platoon
Headquarters Company
Band

Ninth Division Artillery
26th Field Artillery Battalion (105 Howitzer)
60th Field Artillery Battalion (105 Howitzer)
84th Field Artillery Battalion (105 Howitzer)
34th Field Artillery Battalion (155 Howitzer)

ATTACHED

899th Tank Destroyer Battalion
746th Tank Battalion
376th AAA (AW) Battalion

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks are due many persons for aiding the author in his quest for information and in the completion of the volume, itself. Besides the group mentioned in the Preface, the following rendered invaluable assistance in bringing Eight Stars to its readers:

Technical Sergeant Lloyd S. Bruckner, Private Robert N. Atwater, Major Charles Rousek, Lieutenant Sauveur and his company of Belgian Forestiers, Edward A. Bulman, George J. Aneson, Nicholas Tedesco, William C. Ogburn, James A. Cascio, Marion Lee, Ed Jankowski, Jessey Miller, Ray Conway, Robert M. Richie, Joseph Miller, Frank Serra, Andrew Valero, Jr., Donald J. Croto, Alex Martinez, L. Prince, F. D. Amone, William E. Dowdy, Jr., Simon A. Garber, Robert M. Buck, Miss Yarborough, William Nye, Captain Henriques, Miss Emerson, Joseph Easterman, Fred Paas, Jack Svec and Captain T. Wilkins.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

(Armyisms and words and abbreviations frequently not found in collegiate-type dictionaries)

AAA: Anti-Aircraft Artillery
AAA-O: Anything, Anywhere, Anytime, Bar Nothing; referring to 39th Inf.
AFN: Armed Forces Network
ANZACS: Australian and New Zealand Army Corps
aperitif: wine often use as appetizer
APO: Army Post Office
ARC: American Red Cross
armd.: armored
artificial moonlight: pertaining to searchlights used to lengthen fighting day
A.T.: Anti-Tank
A.T.S.:Auxiliary Territorial Service
Autobahn: four-laned super highway
AW: Automatic Weapons

battery: artillery unit of approximately company strength; two or more guns
BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation
big picture: overall situation as viewed from high headquarters
Big Red One: 1st Inf. Div. nickname
Bn.: Battalion
bob: 1 shilling
bunk fatigue: resting atop one's bed
buttoned-up: maximum closing of protective armor or fortification
Buzz-Bomb: V-1 or flying bomb; robot bomb

calvados: applejack
Cav.: Cavalry
CC: Combat Command, such as CCA
C'est la guerre: That is war
C.G. commanding general
chott: salt lake
Co.: company
C.O.: commanding officer
combat team: generally an infantry regiment reinforced by an artillery battalion and supporting units.
C.P.: command post
C.T.:combat team

Desert Fox: nickname given Marshal Rommel; also Wily desert fox
Desert Rats: British Eighth Army
Div.: Division
Divarty: division artillery; hence Ninth Divarty
djebel: mountain or hill
dorsal: mountain range

eighty-eight (88): effective and versatile German 88mm gun
Elite: German designation for superior troops or units
ET: European Theater
ETO: European Theater of Operations

F.A.: Field Artillery
Falcons (Fighting Falcons): 39th Inf. nickname
flak: anti-aircraft artillery; shells or fragments from same
flying bombs; see Buzz-Bomb
Fortune de la guerre: The fortunes of war

G-1, G-2, G-3, G-4: Military designation for officers or sections handling (1) personnel (2) intelligence (3) plans and training (4) supply and transportation
Go-Devils: 60th Inf. nickname
Gp.: Group

hapennies: half-pennies
Hq.: Headquarters (Hqs.)

Inf.: Infantry
I. & R.: Intelligence and Reconnaissance

kilometer: five-eighths of a mile; 1,000 meters
kaput: destroyed
LCI: Landing Craft Infantry (L.C.I.)
LCVP: Landing Craft Vehicle Personnel
lorries: trucks
LST: Landing Ship Tank (L.S.T.)

M: Medium
marching fire: firing while moving forward
marsala: a wine
Mecz.: Mechanized
meter: 40 inches
mild and bitter: two popular varieties of British beer
mm: milli-meter

National Redoubt: an area in Bavarian and Tirolean Alps where Nazis were expected to make a last stand
nebelwerfer: German six-barreled rocket gun
Notorious: wartime coded name of Ninth Inf. Div.

Octofoil: tri-colored shoulder sleeve insignia of Ninth Inf. Div.
oued: river

Panzer: armor or pertaining to armor
panzerfaust: one-man bazooka stick
Panzer Grenadier: literally tank destroyers; Elite infantry
pinched out: juncture of friendly force or forces which prevents further contact with enemy
policing (up): cleaning or clearing
putsch: a small rebellion
PX: Post Exchange

quid: slang for pound (Br. money); twenty shillings

Raiders: 47th Inf. nickname
R.C.T.: regimental combat team
Recon: Reconnaissance
Regt.: regiment
Rock of the Marne: 3rd Inf. Div. nickname

SHAEF: Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force
S.P.: self-propelled
Spearhead: Often the Spearhead Division or 3rd Armd. Div.

T.D.: tank destroyer
Timberwolves: 104th Inf. Div. nickname

U.K.: United Kingdom

V-1: see Buzz-Bomb
vin blanc: white wine
vino: wine
vin rouge: red wine
Volkssturmer: home guard

WAAF: Women's Auxiliary Air Force
wadi: dried-out stream bed
Wehrmacht: German army
WLA: Women's Land Army
WRENS (WRNS): Women's Royal Naval Service

* * *

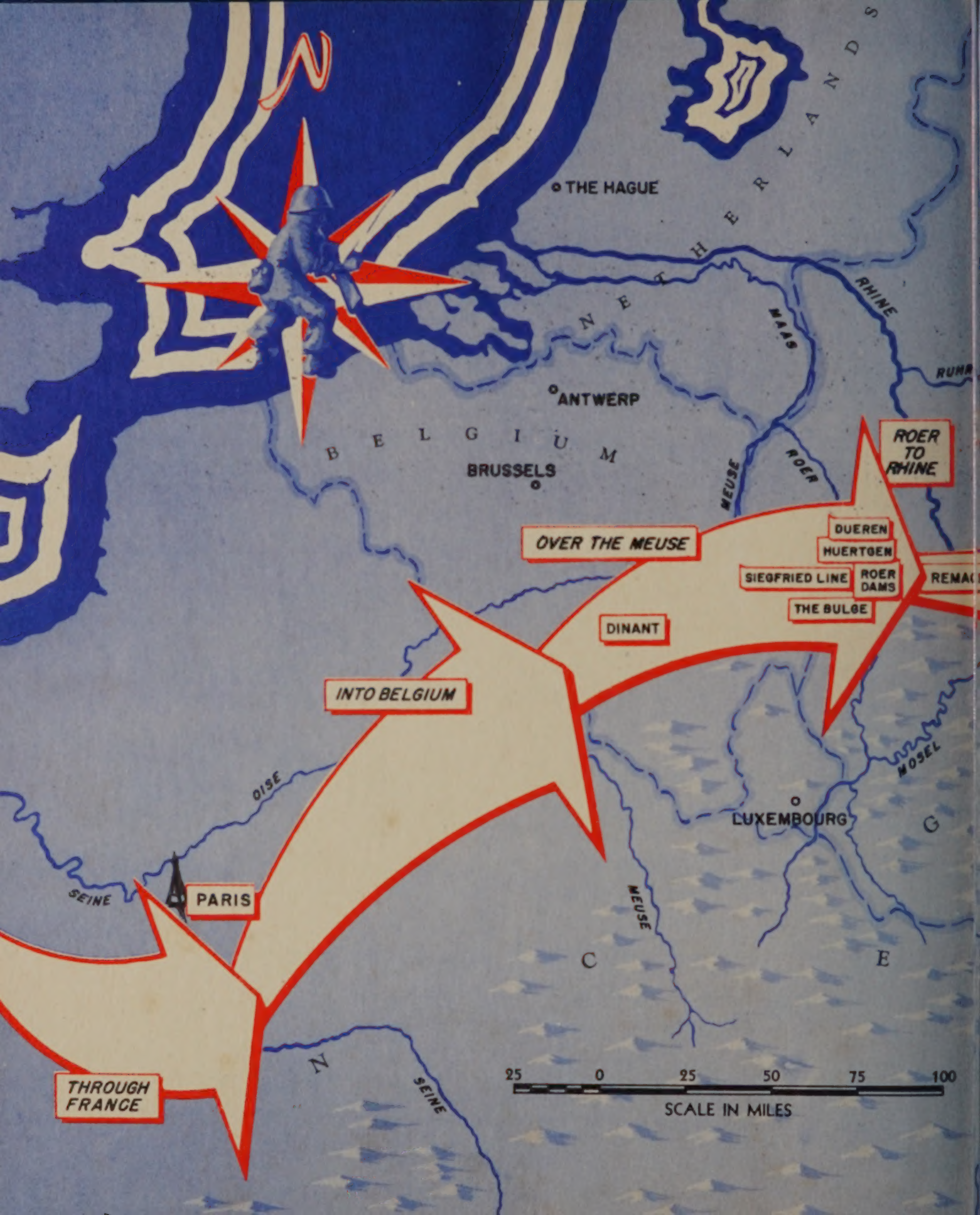
COOPERATION

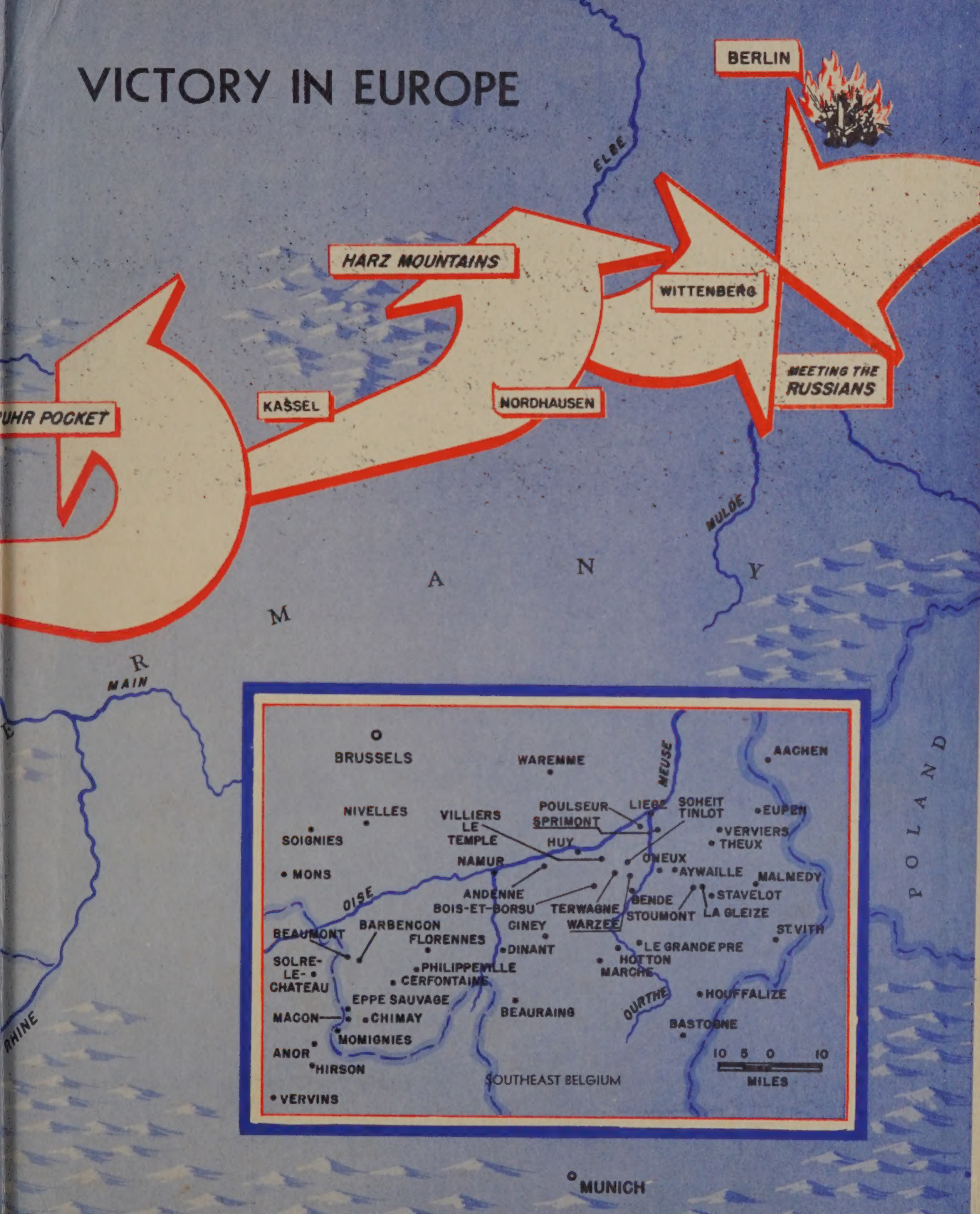
746

HONEST
ENDEAVOR

OMNIA VIDEMUS

L


THE HAGUE
N E T H E R L A N D S
RHINE
MAAS
RUHR
ANTWERP
B E L G I U M
BRUSSELS
MEUSE
ROER
ROER TO RHINE
OVER THE MEUSE
DUEREN
HUERTGEN
SIEGFRIED LINE
ROER DAMS
REMA
THE BULGE
DINANT
INTO BELGIUM
OISE
MOSEL
LUXEMBOURG
G
SEINE
PARIS
MEUSE
C
E
N
SEINE
THROUGH FRANCE
25 0 25 50 75 100
SCALE IN MILES



VICTORY IN EUROPE

BERLIN
ELBE
HARZ MOUNTAINS
WITTENBERG
MEETING THE RUSSIANS
KASSEL
NORDHAUSEN
UHR POCKET
MULDE
M
A
N
Y
R
MAIN
RHINE
POLAND
BRUSSELS
WAREMME
MEUSE
AACHEN
NIVELLES
VILLIERS LE TEMPLE
POULSEUR
SPRIMONT
LIEGE
SOHEIT TINLOT
EUPEN
SOIGNIES
VERVIERS
THEUX
HUY
NAMUR
ONEUX
AYWAILLE
MALMEDY
MONS
ANDENNE
BOIS-ET-BORSU
TERWAGNE
BENDE
STOUMONT
STAVELOT
LA GLEIZE
OISE
BEAUMONT
BARBENCON
FLORENNES
CINEY
WARZEE
ST. VITH
DINANT
LE GRANDE PRE
SOLRE-LE-CHATEAU
PHILIPPEVILLE
HOTTON
MARCHE
CERFONTAINE
EPPE SAUVAGE
OURTHE
HOUFFALIZE
MACON
CHIMAY
BEAURAING
BASTOGNE
MOMIGNIES
ANOR
HIRSON
10 5 0 10
MILES
SOUTHEAST BELGIUM
VERVINS
MUNICH